

ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

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VERY HARD CASH.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "IT IS NEVER TOO LATE TO MEND."

CHAPTER LIV.

MR. HARDIE collapsed as if he had been a man inflated, and that touch had punctured him. "Ah!" said he. "Ah!" said Skinner, in a mighty different tone: insolent triumph to wit.

After a pause, Mr. Hardie made an effort and said contemptuously: "The receipt (if any) was flung into the dusthole and carried away. Do you think I've forgotten that?"

"Don't you believe it, sir," was the reply. "While you turned your back and sacked the money, I said to myself, 'Oho, is that the game?' and nailed the receipt. What a couple of scoundrels we were! I wouldn't have *her* know it for all your money. Come, sir, I see it's all right; you will shell out sooner than be posted."

Here Peggy interposed: "Mr. Skinner, be more considerate; my master is really poor just now."

"That is no reason why I should be insulted and indicted and trampled under foot," snarled Skinner all in one breath.

"Show me the receipt and take my last shilling, you ungrateful vindictive viper," groaned Mr. Hardie.

"Stuff and nonsense," said Skinner. "I'm not a viper; I'm a man of business. Find me five hundred pounds; and I'll show you the receipt and keep dark. But I can't afford to *give* it you for that, of course."

Skinner triumphed, and made the great man apologise, writhing all the time, and wishing he was a day labourer with Peggy to wife, and fourteen honest shillings a week for his income. Having eaten humble pie, he agreed to meet Skinner next Wednesday at midnight, alone, under a certain lamp on the North Kensington-road: the interval (four days) he required to raise money upon his scrip. Skinner bowed himself out, fawning triumphantly. Mr. Hardie stood in the middle of the room motionless, scowling darkly. Peggy looked at him, and saw some dark and sinister resolve forming in his mind: she divined it, as such women can divine. She laid her hand on his arm, and said, softly, "Richard, it's not worth *that*." He

started to find his soul read through his body like a placard through a pane of glass. He trembled.

But it was only for a moment. "His blood be on his own head," he snarled. "This is not my seeking. He shall learn what it is to drive Richard Hardie to despair."

"No, no," said Peggy; "there are other countries beside this: why not gather all you have, and cross the water? I'll follow you to the world's end, Richard."

"Mind your own business," said he fiercely.

She made no reply, but went softly and sat down again, and sewed the buttons on his shirts. Mr. Hardie wrote to Messrs. Heathfield to get Hardie v. Hardie tried as soon as possible.

Meantime came a mental phenomenon: gliding down Sackville-street, victorious, Skinner suddenly stopped, and clenched his hands; and his face writhed as if he had received a death-wound. In that instant Remorse had struck him like lightning; and, perhaps, whence comes the lightning. The sweet face and voice that had smiled on him, and cared for his body, and cared for his soul, came to his mind and knocked at his heart and conscience. He went home miserable with an inward conflict; and it lasted him all the four days: sometimes Remorse got the better, sometimes Avarice. He came to the interview still undecided what he should do. But, meantime, he had gone to a lawyer and made his will, leaving his little all to Julia Dodd: a bad sign this; looked like compounding with his awakened conscience.

It was a dark and gusty night. Very few people were about. Skinner waited a little while, and shivered, for his avarice had postponed the purchase of a great-coat until Christmas-day. At last, when the coast seemed clear, Mr. Hardie emerged from a side-street. Skinner put his hand to his bosom.

They met. Mr. Hardie said quietly, "I must ask you, just for form, to show me you have the Receipt."

"Of course, sir; but not so near, please: no snatching, if I know it."

"You are wonderfully suspicious," said Mr. Hardie, trying to smile.

Skinner looked, and saw by the lamplight he was deadly pale. "Keep your distance a moment, sir," said he, and on Mr. Hardie's comply-

ing, took the Receipt out, and held it up under the lamp.

Instantly Mr. Hardie drew a life-preserver, and sprang on him with a savage curse. And uttered a shriek of dismay; for he was met by the long shiny barrel of a horse-pistol, that Skinner drew from his bosom, and levelled full in the haggard face that came at him. Mr. Hardie recoiled, crying, "No! no! for Heaven's sake!"

"What!" cried Skinner, stepping forward and hissing, "do you think I'm such a fool as to meet a thief unarmed? Come, cash up, or I'll blow you to atoms."

"No, no, no!" said Mr. Hardie, piteously, retreating as Skinner marched on him with long extended pistol. "Skinner," he stammered, "th-this is n-not b-b-business."

"Cash up, then; that's business. Fling the five hundred pounds down, and walk away. Mind, it is loaded with two bullets; I'll make a double entry on your great treacherous carcass."

"It's no use trying to deceive such a man as you," said Mr. Hardie, playing on his vanity. "I could not get the money before Saturday, and so I listened to the dictates of despair. Forgive me."

"Then come again on Saturday night. Come alone, and I shall bring a man to see I'm not murdered. And look here, sir, if you don't come to the hour and do the right thing without any more of these unbusiness-like tricks, by Heaven I'll smash you before noon on Monday."

"I'll come."

"I'll blow you to Mr. Alfred and Miss Dodd."

"I'll come, I tell you."

"I'll post you for a thief on every brick in the Exchange."

"Have mercy, Skinner. Have pity on the wretched man whose bread you have eaten. I tell you I'll come."

"Well, mind you do, then, cash and all," said Skinner, sulkily, but not quite proof against the reminiscences those humble words awakened.

Each walked backwards a good dozen steps, and then they took different roads, Skinner taking good care not to be tracked home. He went up the high stairs to the hole in the roof he occupied, and lighted a rushlight. He had half a mind to kindle a fire, he felt so chilly; but he had stopped up the vent, partly to keep out the cold, partly to shun the temptation of burning fuel. However, he stopped the keyhole with paper, and also the sides of the window, till he had shut the wintry air all out. Still, what with the cold and what with the reaction after so great an excitement, his feeble body began to shiver desperately. He thought at last he would light a foot-warmer he had just purchased for old iron at a broker's; that would only spend a halfpenny-worth of charcoal. No he wouldn't; he would look at his money; that would cheer him. He unripped a certain part of his straw mattress and took out a bag of gold. He spread three hundred sovereigns on the floor, and put the candle down among them. They

sparkled; they were all new ones, and he rubbed them with an old toothbrush and whiting every week. "That's better than any fire," he said; "they warm the heart. For one thing they are my own; at all events I did not steal them, nor take them of a thief for a bribe to keep dark and defraud honest folk." Then Remorse gripped him: he asked himself what he was going to do.

"To rob an angel," was the answer. "The fourteen thousand pounds is all hers, and I could give it her in a moment. Curse him, he would have killed me for it."

Then he pattered about and took out his will.

"Ah," said he, "that is all right, so far. But what is a paltry three hundred when I help do her out of fourteen thousand? Villain!" Then, to ease his conscience, he took a slip of paper and wrote on it a short account of the Receipt, and how he came by it, and lo! as if an unseen power had guided his hand, he added, "Miss Dodd lives at 66, Pembroke-street, and I am going to take it to her as soon as I am well of my cold." Whether this preceded an unconscious resolve which had worked on him secretly for some time, or whether it awakened such a resolve, I hardly know: but certain it is, that having written it, he now thought seriously of doing it; and, the more seriously he entertained the thought, the more good it seemed to do him. He got "The Sinner's Friend" and another good book she had lent him, and read a bit: then, finding his feet frozen, he lighted his chafer and blew it well, and put it under his feet and read. The good words began to reach his heart more and more: so did the thought of Julia's goodness. The chafer warned his feet and legs. "Ay," said he, "men don't want fires; warm the feet and the body warms itself." He took out "The Receipt" and held it in his hand, and eyed it greedily, and asked himself could he really part with it. He thought he could—to Julia. Still holding it tight in his left hand, he read on the good but solemn words that seemed to loosen his grasp upon that ill-gotten paper. "How good it was of her," he thought, "to come day after day and feed a poor little fellow like him, body and soul. She asked nothing back. She didn't know he could make her any return. Bless her! bless her!" he screamed. "Oh, how cruel I have been to her, and she so kind to me. She would never let me want, if I took her fourteen thousand pounds. Like enough give me a thousand: and help me save my poor soul, that I shall damn if I meet him again. I won't go his way again. Lead us not into temptation. I repent. Lord have mercy on me a miserable sinner." And tears bedewed those wizened cheeks, tears of penitence, sincere, at least for the time.

A sleepy languor now came over him, and the good book fell from his hand: but his resolution remained unshaken; by-and-by, waking up from a sort of heavy doze, he took, as it were, a last look at the Receipt, and murmured, "My head, how heavy it feels." But presently he roused himself,

full of his penitent resolution, and murmured again brokenly, "I'll—take it to—Pembroke-street to—morrow: to—mor—row."

CHAPTER LV.

MR. HARDIE raised the money on his scrip, and at great inconvenience; for he was holding on five hundred thousand pounds' worth of old Turkish Bonds over an unfavourable settling day, and wanted every shilling to pay his broker. If they did not rise by next settling day, he was a beggar. However, being now a desperate gamester, and throwing for his last stake, he borrowed this sum, and took it with a heavy heart to his appointment with Skinner. Skinner never came. Mr. Hardie waited till one o'clock. Two o'clock. No Skinner. Mr. Hardie went home hugging his five hundred pounds, but very uneasy. Next day he consulted Peggy. She shook her head, and said it looked very ugly. Skinner had, most likely, got angrier and angrier with thinking on the assault. "You will never see him again till the day of the trial: and then he will go down and bear false witness against you. Why not leave the country?"

"How can I, simpleton? My money is all locked up in time-bargains. No, I'm tied to the stake; I'll fight to the last: and, if I'm defeated and disgraced, I'll die, and end it."

Peggy implored him not to talk so. "I've been down to the court," said she softly, "to see what it is like. There's a great hall; and he must pass through that to get into the little places where they try 'em. Let me be in that hall with the five hundred pounds, and I promise you he shall never appear against you. We will both go; you with the money, I with my woman's tongue."

He gave her his hand like a shaky monarch, and said she had more wit than he had.

Mr. Heathfield, who had contrived to postpone Hardie v. Hardie six times in spite of Compton, could not hurry it on now with his co-operation. It hung fire from some cause or another a good fortnight: and in this fortnight Hardie senior endured the tortures of suspense. Skinner made no sign. At last, there stood upon the paper for next day, a short case of disputed contract, and Hardie v. Hardie.

The witnesses subpoenaed on either side in Hardie v. Hardie, began to arrive at ten o'clock, and a tall, stately man paraded Westminster Hall, to see if Skinner came with them; all other anxieties had merged in this: for the counsel had assured him if nothing unexpected turned up, Thomas Hardie would have a verdict, or if not, the damages would be nominal.

Now, this day, I must premise, was to settle the whole lawsuit: for, while trial of the issue was being postponed and postponed, the legal question had been argued and disposed of. The very Queen's counsel, unfavourable to the suit, was briefed with Garrow's views, and delivered them in court with more skill, clearness, and effect than Garrow ever could; then sat down,

and whispered over rather contemptuously to Mr. Compton, "That is your argument, I think." "And admirably put," whispered the attorney, in reply.

"Well; now hear Saunders knock it to pieces."

Instead of that, it was Serjeant Saunders that got maltreated: first one judge had a peck at him: then another: till they left him scarce a feather to fly with; and, when Alfred's counsel rose to reply, the judges stopped him, and the chief of the court, Alfred's postponing enemy, delivered his judgment after this fashion:

"We are all of opinion that this plea is bad in law. By the common law of England no person can be imprisoned as a lunatic unless actually insane at the time. It has been held so for centuries, and down to the last case. And wisely: for it would be most dangerous to the liberty of the subject, if a man could be imprisoned without remedy unless he could prove mala fides in the breast of the party incarcerating him. As for the statute, it does not mend the matter, but rather the reverse; for it expressly protects duly authorised persons acting under the order and certificates, and this must be construed to except from the protection of the statute the person making the order."

The three puisne judges concurred, and gave similar reasons. One of them said that if A. imprisoned B. for a *felon*, and B. sued him, it was no defence to say that B., in his opinion, had imitated felony. They cited Elliot v. Allen, Anderdon v. Burrows, and Lord Mansfield's judgment in a very old case, the name of which I have unfortunately forgotten.

Judgment was entered for the plaintiff; and the defendant's ingenious plea struck off the record; and Hardie v. Hardie became the leading case. But in law one party often wins the skirmish and the other the battle. The grand fight, as I have already said, was to be to-day.

But the high hopes and ardour with which the young lovers had once come into court were now worn out by the postponement swindle, and the adverse events delay had brought on them. Alfred was not there: he was being examined in the schools; and had plumply refused to leave a tribunal that named its day and kept it—for Westminster, until his counsel should have actually opened the case. He did not believe trial by jury would ever be allowed him. Julia was there, but sad and comparatively listless. One of those strange vague reports, which often herald more circumstantial accounts, had come home, whispering darkly that her father was dead, and buried on an island in the South Sea. She had kept this report from her mother, contrary to Edward's wish: but she implored him to restrain his fatal openness. In one thing both these sorely tried young people agreed, that there could be no marriage with Alfred now. But here again Julia entreated her brother not to be candid; not to tell Alfred this at present. "Oh, do not go and dispirit him just now," she

said, "or he will do something rash. No, he must and shall get his first class, and win his trial; and then you know any lady will be too proud to marry him; and, when he is married and happy, you can tell him I did all I could for him, and hunted up the witnesses, and was his loving friend, though I could not—be—his—wife."

She could not say this without crying; but she said it for all that, and meant it too.

Besides helping Mr. Compton to get up the evidence, this true and earnest friend and lover had attended the court day after day, to watch how things were done, and, woman-like, to see what *pleased* and what *displeased* the court. And so at last the court crier cried, with a loud voice, "Hardie v. Hardie." Julia's eyes roved very anxiously for Alfred, and up rose Mr. Garrow, and stated to the court the substance of the declaration; "to this," he said, "three pleas have been pleaded: first, the plea of not guilty, which is a formal plea; also another plea, which has been demurred to, and struck off the record; and, lastly, that at the time of the alleged imprisonment the plaintiff was of unsound mind, and a fit person to be confined; which is the issue now to be tried."

Mr. Garrow then sat down, very tired of this preliminary work, and wondering when he should have the luck to conduct such a case as Hardie v. Hardie; and leaned forward to be ready to prompt his senior, a portly counsel, whom Mr. Compton had retained because he was great at addressing juries, and no point of law could now arise in the case.

Colt, Q.C., rose like a tower, knowing very little of the facts, and seeming to know everything. He had a prodigious business, and was rather indolent, and often skimmed his brief at home, and then mastered it in court—if he got time. Now, it is a good general's policy to open a plaintiff's case warily, and reserve your rhetoric for the reply; and Mr. Colt always took this line when his manifold engagements compelled him, as in Hardie v. Hardie, to teach his case first and learn it afterwards. I will only add, that in the course of his opening he was on the edge of seven distinct blunders; but Garrow watched him and always shot a whisper like a bullet just in time. Colt took it, and glided away from incipient error imperceptibly, and with a tact you can have no conception of. The jury did not detect the creaking of this machinery; Serjeant Saunders did, and grinned satirically; so did poor Julia, and her cheeks burned and her eyes flashed indignant fire. And horror of horrors, Alfred did not appear.

Mr. Colt's opening may be thus condensed: The plaintiff was a young gentleman of great promise and distinction, on whom, as usual in these cases of false imprisonment, money was settled. He was a distinguished student at Eton and Oxford, and no doubt was ever expressed of his sanity till he proposed to marry, and take his money out of his trustees' hands by a marriage

settlement. On this his father, who up to that time had managed his funds as principal trustee, showed him great personal hostility for some time, and looked out for a tool: that tool he soon found in his brother, the defendant, a person who, it would be proved, had actually not seen the plaintiff for a year and a half, yet, with great recklessness and inhumanity, had signed away his liberty and his happiness behind his back. Then tools of another kind—the kind that anybody can buy, a couple of doctors—were, as usual, easily found to sign the certificates. One of these doctors had never seen him but for five minutes, and signed in manifest collusion with the other. They decoyed this poor young gentleman away on his wedding morning—on his wedding morning, gentlemen, mark that—and consigned him to the worst of all dungeons. What he suffered there he must himself relate to you: for we, who have the happiness to walk abroad in the air of reason and liberty, are little able to realise the agony of mind endured by a sane man confined among the insane. What we undertake is to prove his sanity up to the very hour of his incarceration; and also that he was quite sane at the time when a brutal attempt to recapture him by violence was made under the defendant's order, and defeated by his own remarkable intelligence and courage. Along with the facts the true reason why he was imprisoned will probably come out. But I am not bound to prove sinister motives. It is for the defendant to prove, if he can, that he had lawful motives for a lawless act; and that he exercised due precaution, and did not lend himself recklessly to the dark designs of others. If he succeed in this, that may go in mitigation of damages, though it cannot affect the verdict. *Our* principal object is the verdict, which will remove the foul aspersion cast on my injured client, and restore him to society. And to this verdict we are entitled, unless the other side can prove the plaintiff was insane. Call Alfred Hardie.

And with this he sat down.

An official called Alfred Hardie very loud; he made no reply. Julia rose from her seat with dismay painted on her countenance. Compton's, Garrow's, and Colt's heads clashed together.

Mr. Colt jumped up again, and said, "My Lud, I was not aware the gentleman they accuse of insanity is just being examined for high honours in the University of Oxford." Aside to Compton, "And if he doesn't come, you may give them the verdict."

"Well," said the judge, "I suppose he will be here before you close your case."

On this the three heads clashed again, and Serjeant Saunders, for the defendant, popped up, and said with great politeness and affectation of sympathy, "My Lud, I can quite understand my learned friend's hesitation to produce his principal witness."

"You understand nothing about the matter," said Colt cavalierly. "Call Mr. Harrington."

Mr. Harrington was Alfred's tutor at Eton,

and deposed to his sanity there: he was not cross-examined. After him they went on step by step with a fresh witness for every six months, till they brought him close to the date of his incarceration: then they put in one of Julia's witnesses, Peterson, who swore Alfred had talked to him like a sane person that very morning; and repeated what had passed. Cross-examination only elicited that he and Alfred were no longer good friends, which rather strengthened the evidence. Then Giles and Hannab, now man and wife, were called, and swore he was sane all the time he was at Silverton House. Mr. Saunders diminished the effect by eliciting that they had left on bad terms with Mr. Baker, and that Alfred had given them money since. But this was half cured on re-examination, by being set down to gratitude on Alfred's part. And now the judge went to luncheon: and in came a telegraphic message to say Alfred was in the fast train coming up. This was good news, and bad. They had hoped he would drop in before. They were approaching that period of the case, when not to call the plaintiff must produce a vile impression. The judge, out of good nature I suspect, was longer at luncheon than usual, and every minute was so much gained to Mr. Compton and Julia, who were in a miserable state of anxiety. Yet it was equalled by Richard Hardie's, who never entered the court, but paced the hall the livelong day to intercept Noah Skimmer. And, when I tell you that Julia had consulted Mr. Green, and that he had instantly pronounced Mr. Barkington to be a man from Barkington who knew the truth about the fourteen thousand pounds, and that the said Green and his myrmidons were hunting Mr. Barkington like beagles, you will see that R. Hardie's was no vain terror. At last the judge returned, and Mr. Colt was obliged to put in his reserves; so called Dr. Sampson. Instantly a very dull trial became an amusing one; the scorn with which he treated the opinion of Dr. Wycherley and Mr. Speers, and medical certificates in general, was so droll coming from a doctor, and so racily expressed, that the court was convulsed. Also in cross-examination by Saunders he sparred away in such gallant style with that accomplished advocate, that it was mighty refreshing. The judge put in a few intelligent questions after counsel had done, and surprised all the doctors in court with these words: "I am aware, sir, that you were the main instrument in putting down blood-letting in this country."

What made Sampson's evidence particularly strong was, that he had seen the plaintiff the evening before his imprisonment.

At this moment three men, all of them known to the reader, entered the court; one was our old acquaintance Fullalove, another was of course Vespasian: and the third was the missing plaintiff.

A buzz announced his arrival; and expectation rose high. Mr. Colt called him with admirably

feigned nonchalance: he stepped into the box, and there was a murmur of surprise and admiration at his bright countenance and manly bearing.

Of course to give his evidence would be to write "Hard Cash" over again. It is enough to say that his examination in chief lasted all that day, and an hour of the next.

Colt took him into the asylum, and made him say what he had suffered there to swell the damages. The main points his examination in chief established were his sanity during his whole life, the money settled on him, the means the doctors took to irritate him, and then sign him excited, the subserviency of his uncle to his father, the double motive his father had in getting him imprisoned; the business of the 14,000.

When Colt sat down at eleven o'clock on the second day, the jury looked indignant, and the judge looked very grave, and the case very black.

Mr. Saunders electrified his attorney by saying, "My advice is, don't cross-examine him."

Heathfield implored him not to take so strange a course.

On this Saunders shrugged his shoulders, rose, and cross-examined Alfred about the vision of one Captain Dodd he had seen, and about his suspicions of his father. "Had not Richard Hardie always been a kind and liberal father?" To this he assented. "Had he not sacrificed a large fortune to his creditors?" Plaintiff believed so. "On reflection, then, did not plaintiff think he must have been under an illusion?" No; he had gone by direct evidence.

Confining himself sagaciously to this one question, and exerting all his skill and pertinacity, Saunders succeeded in convincing the court that the Hard Cash was a myth: a pure chimera. The defendant's case looked up; for there are many intelligent madmen with a single illusion.

The re-examination was of course very short, but telling; for Alfred swore that Miss Julia Dodd had helped him to carry home the phantom of her father, and that Miss Dodd had a letter from her father to say that he was about to sail with the other phantom, the 14,000.

Here Mr. Saunders interposed, and said that evidence was inadmissible. Let him call Miss Dodd.

Colt.—How do you know I'm not going to call her?

The Judge.—If you are, it is superfluous; if not, it is inadmissible.

Mr. Compton cast an inquiring glance up at a certain gallery. A beautiful girl bowed her head in reply, with a warm blush and such a flash of her eye, and Mr. Colt said, "As my learned friend is afraid to cross-examine the plaintiff on any point but this, and as I mean to respond to his challenge, and call Miss Dodd, I will not trouble the plaintiff any further."

Through the whole ordeal Alfred showed a certain flavour of Eton and Oxford that won all hearts. His replies were frank and honest, and under cross-examination he was no more to be

irritated than if Saunders had been Harrow bowling at him, or the Robin sparring with him. The serjeant, who was a gentleman, indicated some little regret at the possible annoyance he was causing him. Alfred replied, with a grand air of good fellowship, "Do not think so poorly of me as to suppose I feel aggrieved because you are an able advocate and do your duty to your client, sir."

The Judge.—That is very handsomely said. I am afraid you have got an awkward customer, in a case of this kind, brother Saunders.

Serjt. S.—It is not for want of brains he is mad, my lord.

Alfred.—That is a comfort, any way. (Laughter.)

When counsel had done with him, the judge used his right, and put several shrewd and unusual questions to him: asked him to define insanity: he said he could only do it by examples: and he abridged several intelligent madmen, their words and ways; and contrasted them with the five or six sane people he had fallen in with in asylums; showing his lordship plainly that *he* could tell any insane person whatever from a sane one, and vice versa. This was the most remarkable part of the trial, to see this shrewd old judge extracting from a real observer and logical thinker those positive indicia of sanity and insanity, which exist, but which no lawyer has ever yet been able to extract from any psychological physician in the witness-box. At last he was relieved, and sat sucking an orange among the spectators; for they had parched his throat amongst them, I promise you.

Julia Dodd entered the box, and a sunbeam seemed to fill the court. She knew what to do: her left hand was gloved, but her white right hand bare. She kissed the book, and gave her evidence in her clear, mellow, melting voice; gave it reverently and modestly, for to her the court was a church. She said how long she had been acquainted with Alfred, and how his father was adverse, and her mother had thought it was because they did not pass for rich, and had told her they *were* rich, and with this she produced David's letter, and she also swore to having met Alfred and others carrying her father in a swoon from his father's very door. She deposed to Alfred's sanity on her wedding eve, and on the day his recapture was attempted.

Saunders, against his own judgment, was instructed to cross-examine her; and, without meaning it, he put a question which gave her deep distress. "Are you now engaged to the plaintiff?" She looked timidly round, and saw Alfred, and hesitated. The serjeant pressed her politely, but firmly.

"Must I reply to that?" she said piteously.

"If you please."

"Then, no. Another misfortune has now separated him and me for ever."

"What is that, pray?"

"My father is said to have died at sea: and my mother thinks *he* is to blame."

The Judge to Saunders.—What on earth has this to do with Hardie against Hardie?

Saunders.—You are warmly interested in the plaintiff's success?

Julia.—Oh yes, sir.

(Colt aside to Garrow.—The fool is putting his foot into it: there's not a jury in England that would give a verdict to part two interesting young lovers.)

Saunders.—You are attached to him?

Julia.—Ah, that I do.

This burst, intended for poor Alfred, not the court, baffled cross-examination and grammar and everything else. Saunders was wise and generous, and said no more.

Colt cast a glance of triumph, and declined to re-examine. He always let well alone. The judge, however, evinced a desire to trace the fourteen thousand pounds from Calcutta; but Julia could not help him: that mysterious sum had been announced by letter as about to sail, and then no more was heard about it till Alfred accused his father of having it. All endeavours to fill this hiatus failed. However Julia, observing that in courts material objects affect the mind most, had provided herself with all the pieces de conviction she could find, and she produced her father's empty pocket-book, and said, when he was brought home senseless, this was in his breast-pocket.

"Hand it up to me," said the judge. He examined it, and said it had been in the water.

"Captain Dodd was wrecked off the French coast," suggested Mr. Saunders.

"My learned friend had better go into the witness-box, if he means to give evidence," said Mr. Colt.

"You are very much afraid of a very little truth," retorted Saunders.

The judge stopped this sham rencontre, by asking the witness whether her father had been wrecked. She said "Yes."

"And that is how the money was lost," persisted Saunders.

"Possibly," said the judge.

"I'm darned if it was," said Joshua Fullalove, composedly.

Instantly, all heads were turned in amazement at this audacious interruption to the soporific decorum of an English court. The transatlantic citizen received this battery of eyes with complete imperturbability.

"Si-lence!" roared the crier, awaking from a nap, with an instinct that something unusual had happened. But the shrewd old judge had caught the sincerity with which the words were uttered; and put on his spectacles to examine the speaker.

"Are you for the plaintiff or the defendant?"

"I don't know either of 'em from Adam, my lord. But I know Captain Dodd's pocket-book by the bullet-hole."

"Indeed! You had better call this witness, Mr. Colt."

"Your lordship must excuse me; I am quite content with the evidence."

"Well, then, I shall call him *amicus curiæ*; and the defendant's counsel can cross-examine him."

Fullalove went into the box, was sworn, identified the pocket-book, and swore he had seen fourteen thousand pounds in it on two occasions. With very little prompting, he told the sea-fight, and the Indian darkie's attempt to steal the money, and pointed out Vespasian as the rival darkie who had baffled the attempt. Then he told the shipwreck to an audience now breathless—and imagine the astonished interest with which Julia and Edward listened to this stranger telling them the new strange story of their own father!—and lastly, the attempt of the two French wreckers and assassins, and how it had been baffled. And so the mythical cash was tracked to Boulogne.

The judge then put this question: "Did Captain Dodd tell you what he intended to do with it?"

Fullalove (reverently).—I think, my lord, he said he was going to give it to his wife. (Sharply.) Well, what is it, old hoss? What are you making mugs at me for? don't you know it's clean against law to telegraph a citizen in the witness-box?

The Judge.—This won't do; this won't do.

The Crier.—Silence in the court.

"Do you hyar now what his lordship says?" said Fullalove, with ready tact. "If you know anything more, come up hyar and swear it like an enlightened citizen; do you think I'm going to swear for tew." With this Vespasian and Fullalove proceeded to change places amidst roars of laughter at the cool off-hand way this pair arranged forensicalities; but Serjeant Saunders requested Fullalove to stay where he was. "Pray sir," said he slowly, "who retained you for a witness in this cause?"

Fullalove looked puzzled.

"Of course somebody asked you to drop in here, so very accidentally: come now, who was it?"

"I'm God Almighty's witness dropped from the clouds, I cal'late."

"Come, sir, no prevarication. How came you here just at the nick of time?"

"Counsellor, when I'm treated polite I'm ile; but rile me and I'm thunder stuffed with pison: don't you raise my dander, and I'll tell you. I have undertaken to educate this yar darkie"—here he stretched out a long arm, and laid his hand on Vespasian's woolly pate—"and I'm bound to raise him to the Eu-ropean model. (Laughter.) So I said to him, coming over Westminster Bridge, Now there's a store hyar where they sell a very extraordinary Fixin; and its called Justice: they sell it tarnation dear; *but* prime. So I make tracks for the very court where I got the prime article three years ago, against a varmint that was breaking the seventh and eighth commandments over me, adulterating my patent and then stealing it. Blast him! A roar of laughter.) And coming along I said

this old country's got some good pints after all, old hoss. One is they'll sell you justice dear, *but* prime, in these yar courts, if you were born at Kamschatke; and the other is, hyar darkies are free as air, disenthralled by the univarsal genius of British liberty; and then I pitched Counsellor Curran's bunkum into this darkie, and he sucked it in like mother's milk, and in we came on tip-toe, and the first thing we heard was a freeborn Briton treated wus than ever a nigger in Old Kentuck, decoyed away from his gal, shoved into a darned madhouse—the darbies clapped on him—"

"We don't want your comments on the case, sir."

"No, nor any other free and enlightened citizen's, I reckon. Wal, Vespasian and me sat like mice in a snowdrift, and hid our feelings out of good manners, being strangers, till his lordship got e-tarnally fixed about the captain's pocket-book. Vesp says I, this hurts my feelings powerful. Says I, this hyar lord did the right thing about my patent, he summed up just: and now he is in an everlasting fix himself; one good turn deserves another, I'll get him out of this fix, any way." Here the witness was interrupted with a roar of laughter that shook the court. Even the judge leaned back and chuckled, genially, though quietly. And right sorrowful was every Briton there when Saunders closed abruptly the cross-examination of Joshua Fullalove.

His lordship then said he wished to ask Vespasian a question.

Saunders lost patience. "What, another *amicus curiæ*, my lud! This is unprecedented."

"Excuse my curiosity, Brother Saunders," said the judge, ironically. "I wish to trace this 14,000*l.* as far as possible. Have you any particular objection to the truth on this head of evidence?"

"No, my lud, I never urge objections when I can't enforce them."

"Then you are a wise man. (To Vespasian after he had been sworn.) Pray did Captain Dodd tell you what he intended to do with this money?"

"Is, massa judge, massa captain told dis child he got a branker in some place in de ole country, called Barkinton. And he said dis branker bery good branker, much sartainer not to break dan the brank of England. (A howl.) De captain said he take de money to dis yer branker, and den hab no more trouble wid it. Den it off my stomach, de captain say, and dis child heerd him. Yah!"

The plaintiff's case being apparently concluded, the judge went to luncheon.

In the buzz that followed, a note was handed to Mr. Compton: "*Skinner!* On a hot scent. Sure to find him to-day.—N.B. He is wanted by another party. There is something curious a foot!"

Compton wrote on a slip, "For Heaven's sake

bring him directly. In half an hour it will be too late."

Green hurried out and nearly ran against Mr. Richard Hardie, who was moodily pacing Westminster Hall at the climax of his own anxiety. To him all turned on Skinner. Five minutes passed, ten, fifteen, twenty: all the plaintiff's party had their eyes on the door; but Green did not return; and the judge did. Then to gain a few minutes more, Mr. Colt, instructed by Compton, rose and said with great solemnity, "We are about to call our last witness; the living have testified to my client's sanity; and now we shall read you the testimony of the dead."

Saunders.—That I object to, of course.

Colt.—Does my learned friend mean to say he objects at random?

Saunders.—Nothing of the kind. I object on the law of evidence, a matter on which my learned friend seems to be under a hallucination as complete as his clients about that 14,000*l*.

Colt.—

There's none ever feared
That the truth should be heard
But they whom the truth would indict.

Saunders.—I've as little respect for old songs in a court of justice as I have for new law.

Colt.—Really, my learned friend is the objective case incarnate. (To Compton.—I can't keep this nonsense up for ever. Is Skinner come?) He has a Mania for objection, and with your lordship's permission I'll buy a couple of doctors and lock him up in an asylum as he leaves the court this afternoon. (Laughter.)

The Judge.—A very good plan: then you'll no longer feel the weight of his abilities. I conclude, Mr. Colt, you intend to call a witness who will swear to the deceased person's handwriting, and that it was written in the knowledge Death was at hand.

Colt.—Certainly, my lord. I can call Miss Julia Dodd.

Saunders.—That I need not take the trouble of objecting to.

The Judge (with some surprise).—No, Mr. Colt. That will never do. You have examined her, and re-examined her.

I need hardly say Mr. Colt knew very well he could not call Julia Dodd. But he was fighting for seconds now, to get in Skinner. "Call Edward Dodd."

Edward was sworn, and asked if he knew the late Jane Hardie.

"I knew her well," said he.

"Is that her handwriting?"

"It is."

"Where was it written?"

"In my mother's house at Barkington."

"Under what circumstances?"

"She was dying—of a blow given her by a maniac called Maxley."

"Maxley!" said the judge to counsel. "I remember the Queen v. Maxley. I tried it myself at the assizes: it was for striking a young

lady with a bludgeon, of which she died. Maxley was powerfully defended; and it was proved that his wife had died, and he had been driven mad for a time, by her father's bank breaking. The jury *would* bring in a verdict that was no verdict at all; as I took the liberty to tell them at the time. The judges dismissed it, and Maxley was eventually discharged."

Colt.—No doubt that was the case, my lord. (To the witness.) Did Jane Hardie know she was dying?

"Oh yes, sir. She told us all so."

"To whom did she give this letter?"

"To my sister."

"Oh, to your sister? To Miss Julia Dodd?"

"Yes, sir. But not for herself. It was to give to Alfred Hardie."

"Can you read the letter? it is rather faintly written. It is written in pencil, my lord."

"I *could* read it, sir; but I hope you will excuse me. She that wrote it was very, very dear to me."

The young man's full voice faltered as he uttered these words, and he turned his lion-like eyes soft and imploring on the judge. That venerable and shrewd old man, learned in human nature as well as in law, comprehended in a moment, and said, kindly, "You misunderstand him. Witnesses do not read letters *out* in court. Let the letter be handed up to me." This was fortunate, for the court cuckoo, who intones most letters, would have read all the sense and pathos out of this with his monotonous sing-song.

The judge read it carefully to himself with his glasses, and told the jury it seemed a genuine document; then the crier cried "Silence in the court," and his lordship turned towards the jury, and read the letter slowly and solemnly:

"DEAR, DEAR BROTHER,—YOUR POOR LITTLE JANE LIES DYING, SUDDENLY BUT NOT PAINFULLY, AND MY LAST EARTHLY THOUGHTS ARE FOR MY DARLING BROTHER. SOME WICKED PERSON HAS SAID YOU ARE INSANE. I DENY THIS WITH MY DYING BREATH AND MY DYING HAND. YOU CAME TO ME THE NIGHT BEFORE THE WEDDING THAT WAS TO BE, AND TALKED TO ME MOST CALMLY, RATIONALLY, AND KINDLY; SO THAT I COULD NOT RESIST YOUR REASONS, AND WENT TO YOUR WEDDING, WHICH, TILL THEN, I DID NOT INTEND. SHOW THESE WORDS TO YOUR SLANDERERS WHEN I AM NO MORE. BUT OH! ALFRED, EVEN THIS IS OF LITTLE MOMENT COMPARED WITH THE WORLD TO COME. BY ALL OUR AFFECTION GRANT ME ONE REQUEST. BATTERED, WOUNDED, DYING IN MY PRIME, WHAT WOULD BE MY CONDITION BUT FOR THE SAVIOUR, WHOM I HAVE LOVED, AND WITH WHOM I HOPE SOON TO BE. HE SMOOTHS THE BED OF DEATH FOR ME, HE LIGHTS THE DARK VALLEY; I REJOICE TO DIE AND BE WITH HIM. OH, TURN TO HIM, DEAR BROTHER, WITHOUT ONE HOUR'S DELAY, AND THEN HOW SHORT WILY BE THIS PARTING. THIS IS YOUR DYING SISTER'S ONE REQUEST, WHO LOVES YOU DEARLY."

With the exception of Julia's sobs, not a sound

was heard as the judge read it. Many eyes were wet: and the judge himself was visibly affected, and pressed his handkerchief a moment to his eyes. "These are the words of a Christian woman, gentlemen," he said: and there was silence. A girl's hand seemed to have risen from the grave to defend her brother and rend the veil from falsehood.

Mr. Colt, out of pure tact, subdued his voice to the key of the sentiment thus awakened, and said impressively, "Gentlemen of the jury, that is our case:" and so sat down.

CHAPTER LVI.

SERGEANT SAUNDERS thought it prudent to let the emotion subside before opening the defendant's case: so he disarranged his papers, and then rearranged them as before: and, during this, a person employed by Richard Hardie went out and told him this last untoward piece of evidence. He winced: but all was overbalanced by this, that Skinner's evidence was now inadmissible in the cause. He breathed more freely.

Sergeant Saunders rose with perfect dignity and confidence, and delivered a masterly address. In less than ten minutes the whole affair took another colour under that plausible tongue. The tactician began by declaring that the plaintiff was perfectly sane, and his convalescence was a matter of such joy to the defendant, that not even the cruel misinterpretation of facts and motives, to which his amiable client had been exposed, could rob him of that sacred delight. "Our case, gentlemen, is, that the plaintiff is sane, and that he owes his sanity to those prompt, wise, and benevolent measures, which *we* took eighteen months ago, at an unhappy crisis of his mind, to preserve his understanding and his property. Yes, his property, gentlemen; that property which, in a paroxysm of mania, he was going to throw away, as I shall show you by an unanswerable document. He comes here to slander us and mulct us out of five thousand pounds; but I shall show you he is already ten thousand pounds the richer for that act of ours, for which he debits us five thousand pounds, instead of crediting us twice the sum. Gentlemen, I cannot, like my learned friend, call witnesses from the clouds, from the United States, and from the grave; because it has not occurred to my client, strong in the sense of his kindly and honourable intentions, to engage gentlemen from foreign parts, with woolly locks and nasal twangs, to drop in accidentally, and eke out the fatal gaps in evidence. The class of testimony we stand upon is less romantic: it does not seduce the imagination nor play upon the passions; but it is of a much higher character in sober men's eyes, especially in a court of law. I rely, not on witnesses dropped from the clouds, and the stars, and the stripes—to order; nor even on the prejudiced statements of friends and sweethearts, who always swear from the heart rather than from the head and the conscience; but on the calm testimony of indifferent men, and on written documents furnished by the plaintiff, and on con-

temporaneous entries in the books of the asylum, which entries formally describe the plaintiff's acts, and were put down at the time—at the time, gentlemen—with no idea of a trial at law to come, but in compliance with the very proper provisions of a wise and salutary Act. I shall also lay before you the evidence of the medical witnesses who signed the certificates, men of probity and honour, and who have made these subtle maladies of the mind the special study of their whole life. I shall also call the family doctor, who has known the plaintiff and his ailments, bodily and mental, for many years, and communicated his suspicions to one of the first psychological physicians of the age, declining, with a modesty which we, who know less of insanity than he does, would do well to imitate—declining, I say, to pronounce a positive opinion unfavourable to the plaintiff, till he should have compared notes with this learned man, and profited by his vast experience."

In this strain he continued for a good hour, until the defendant's case seemed to be a thing of granite. His oration ended, he called a string of witnesses: every one of whom bore the learned counsel out by his evidence in chief.

But here came the grand distinction between the defendant's case and the plaintiff's. Cross-examination had hardly shaken the plaintiff's witnesses: it literally dissolved the defendant's. Osmond was called, and proved Alfred's headaches and pallor, and his own suspicions. But then Colt forced him to admit that many young people had headaches without going mad, and were pale when thwarted in love, without going mad: and that as to the 14,000*l.* and the phantom, he *knew* nothing; but had taken all that for granted on Mr. Richard Hardie's word.

Dr. Wycherley deposed to Alfred's being insane and abnormally irritable, and under a pecuniary illusion, as stated in his certificate: and to his own vast experience. But the fire of cross-examination melted all his polysyllables into guess-work and hearsay. It melted out of him that he, a stranger, had intruded on the young man's privacy, and had burst into a most delicate topic, his disagreement with his father, and so had himself created the very irritation he had set down to madness. He also had to admit that he knew nothing about the 14,000*l.* or the phantom, but had taken for granted the young man's own father, who consulted him, was not telling him a deliberate and wicked falsehood.

Colt.—In short, sir, you were retained to make the man out insane, just as my learned friend there is retained.

Wycherley.—I think, sir, it would not be consistent with the dignity of my profession to notice that comparison.

Colt.—I leave defendant's counsel to thank you for that. Come, never mind *dignity*; let us have a little *truth*. Is it consistent with your dignity to tell us whether the keepers of private asylums pay you a commission for all the patients you consign to durance vile by your certificates?

Dr. Wycherley fenced with this question, but the remorseless Colt only kept him longer under torture, and dragged out of him that he received fifteen per cent from the asylum keepers for every patient he wrote insane; and that he had an income of eight hundred pounds a year from that source alone. This, of course, was the very thing to prejudice a jury against the defence: and Colt's art was to keep to their level.

Speers, cross-examined, failed to conceal that he was a mere tool of Wycherley's, and had signed in manifest collusion, adhering to the letter of the statute, but violating its spirit: for certainly, the Act never intended by "separate examination," that two doctors should come into the passage, and walk into the room alternately, then reunite, and do the signing as agreed before they ever saw the patient. As to the illusion about the fourteen thousand pounds, Speers owned that the plaintiff had not uttered a word about the subject, but had peremptorily declined it. He had to confess, too, that he had taken for granted Dr. Wycherley was correctly informed about the said illusion.

"In short," said the judge, interposing, "Dr. Wycherley took the very thing for granted which it was his duty to ascertain: and you, sir, not to be behind Dr. Wycherley, took the thing for granted at second hand." And when Speers had left the box, he said to Sergeant Saunders, "If this case is to be defended seriously, you had better call Mr. Richard Hardie without further delay."

"It is my wish, my lud; but I am sorry to say he is in the country very ill; and I have no hope of seeing him here to-morrow."

"Oh, well; so that you *do* call him. I shall not lay hearsay before the jury: hearsay gathered from Mr. Richard Hardie—whom you will call in person if the reports he has circulated have any basis whatever in truth."

Mr. Saunders said coolly, "Mr. Richard Hardie is not the defendant," and flowed on; nor would any but a lawyer have suspected what a terrible stab the judge had given him so quietly.

The surgeon of Silvertown House was then sworn, and produced the case book; and there stood the entries which had been so fatal to Alfred with the visiting justices. Suicide, homicide, self-starvation. But the plaintiff got to Mr. Colt with a piece of paper, on which he had written his view of all this, and cross-examination dissolved the suicide and homicide into a spirited attempt to escape and resist a false imprisonment. As for the self-starvation, Colt elicited that Alfred had eaten at six o'clock though not at two. "And pray, sir," said he, contemptuously, to the witness, "do you never stir out of a madhouse? Do you imagine that gentlemen in their senses dine at two o'clock in the nineteenth century?"

"No. I don't say that."

"What *do* you say, then? Is forcible imprisonment of a bridegroom in a madhouse the thing to give a gentleman a *facititious* appetite at your barbarous dinner-hour?"

In a word, Colt was rough with this witness, and nearly smashed him. Saunders fought gallantly on, and put in Lawyer Crawford with his draft of the insane deed, as he called it, by which the erotic monomaniac Alfred divested himself of all his money in favour of the Dodds. There was no dissolving this deed away; and Crawford swore he had entreated the plaintiff not to insist on his drawing so unheard-of a document; but opposition or question seemed to irritate his client, so that he had complied, and the deed was to have been signed on the wedding-day.

All the lawyers present thought this looked really mad. Fancy a man signing away his property to his wife's relatives!! The court, which had already sat long beyond the usual time, broke up, leaving the defendant with this advantage. Alfred Hardie and his friends made a little knot in the hall outside, and talked excitedly over the incidents of the trial. Mr. Compton introduced Fullalove and Vespasian. They all shook hands with them, and thanked them warmly for the timely and most unexpected aid. But Green and a myrmidon broke in upon their conversation. "I am down on Mr. Barkington, alias Noah Skinner. It isn't very far from here, if you will follow me." Green was as excited as a fox-hound when Pug has begun to trail his brush: the more so that another client of his wanted Noah Skinner; and so the detective was doing a double stroke of business. He led the way; it was dry, and they all went in pairs after him into the back slums of Westminster: and a pretty part that is.

Now as they went along Alfred hung behind with Julia, and asked her what on earth she meant by swearing that it was all over between her and him. "Why your last letter was full of love, dearest; what could you be thinking of to say that?"

She shook her head sadly, and revealed to him with many prayers for forgiveness that she had been playing a part of late: that she had concealed her father's death from him, and the fatal barrier interposed. "I was afraid you would be disheartened, and lose your first class and perhaps your trial. But you are safe now, dear Alfred; I am sure the judge sees through them; for I have studied him for you. I know his face by heart, and all his looks and what they mean. My Alfred will be cleared of this wicked slander, and happy with some one—Ah!"

"Yes, I mean to be happy with some one," said Alfred. "I am not one of your self-sacrificing fools. You shall not sacrifice me to your mother's injustice nor to the caprices of fate. We love one another; but you would immolate me for the pleasure of immolating yourself. Don't provoke me, or I'll carry you off by force. I swear it, by Him who made us both."

"Dearest, how wildly you talk." She hung her head, and had a guilty thrill. She could not help thinking that eccentric little measure would relieve her of the sin of disobedience.

"I'll do it too," said he. "I'm not a man to be beat."

After uttering this doughty resolution he was quite silent, and they went sadly side by side; so dear, so near, yet always some infernal thing or other coming between them. They reached a passage in a miserable street. At the mouth stood two of Green's men, planted there to follow Skinner should he go out: but they reported all quiet. "Bring the old gentleman up," said Green. "I appointed him six o'clock, and it's on the stroke." He then descended the passage, and striking a light led the way up a high stair. Skinner lived on the fifth story. Green tapped at his door. "Mr. Barkington."

No reply.

"Mr. Barkington, I've brought you some money."

No reply.

"Perhaps he is not at home," said Mr. Compton.

"Oh yes, sir, I sent a sharp boy up, and he picked the paper out of the keyhole and saw him sitting reading."

He then applied his own eye to the keyhole. "I see something black," said he; "I think he suspects."

While he hesitated, they became conscious of a pungent vapour stealing through the now open keyhole.

"Hallo!" said Green, "what is this?"

Fullalove observed coolly that Mr. Skinner's lungs must be peculiarly made if he could breathe in that atmosphere. "If you want to see him alive, let me open the door."

"There's something amiss here," said Green gravely.

At that Fullalove whipped out a tool no bigger than a nutcracker, forced the edge in, and sent the door flying open. The room or den was full of an acrid vapour, and close to them sat he they sought motionless.

"Keep the lady back," cried Green, and threw the vivid light of his bull's-eye on a strange, grotesque, and ghastly scene. The floor

was covered with bright sovereigns that glittered in the lamp-light. On the table was an open book, and a candle quite burnt down: the grease had run into a circle.

And as was that grease to the expired light, so was the thing that sat there in human form to the Noah Skinner they had come to seek. Dead this many a day of charcoal fumes, but preserved from decomposition by those very fumes, sat Noah Skinner dried into bones and leather, waiting for them with his own Hard Cash, and with theirs; for, creeping awestruck round that mummified figure seated dead on his pool of sovereigns, they soon noticed in his left hand a paper: it was discoloured by the vapour, and part hid by the dead thumb; but thus much shone out clear and amazing, that it was a banker's receipt to David Dodd, Esq., for 14,010*l.*, drawn at Barkington, and signed for Richard Hardie by Noah Skinner. Julia had drawn back, and was hiding her face; but soon curiosity struggled with awe in the others: they peeped at the Receipt; they touched the weird figure. Its yellow skin sounded like a drum, and its joints creaked like a puppet's. At last Compton suggested that Edward Dodd ought to secure that valuable document.

"No, no," said Edward: "it is too like robbing the dead."

"Then I will," said Compton.

But he found the dead thumb and finger would not part with the receipt; then, as a trifle turns the scale, he hesitated in turn: and all but Julia stood motionless round the body that held the Receipt, the soul of the lost Cash, and still, as in life, seemed loth to part with it.

Then Fullalove came beside the arm-chair, and said, "I'm a man from foreign parts; I have no interest here but justice: and justice I'll dew." He took the dead arm, and the joint creaked: he applied the same lever to the bone and parchment hand he had to the door: it creaked too, but more faintly, and opened and let out this.

Barkington Nov^r 10th 1847
Received of David Dodd Esq^r the sum of
Fourteen Thousand and ten pounds twelve shillings
and Six pence, to account for on demand
For Richard Hardie
Noah Skinner
£ 14010.12.6

A stately foot came up the stair, but no one heard it. All were absorbed in the strange weird sight, and this great stroke of fate; or of Providence.

"This is yours, I reckon," said Fullalove, and handed it to Edward.

"No, no!" said Compton. "See: I've just found a will, bequeathing all he has in the world with his blessing, to Miss Julia Dodd. These sovereigns are yours, then. But above all, the paper: as your legal adviser, I insist on your taking it immediately. Possession is nine points. However, it is actually yours, in virtue of this bequest."

A solemn passionless voice seemed to fall on them from the clouds,

"No; IT IS MINE."

THE MILL-STREAM.

1.

HALF-WAY the running stream is ever hid
By leaflets flattened on the water's face,
And milk-white globed blossoms, thinly spread,
Peep where the woven green hath left a space;
And hither from his earthy dwelling-place
The water-rat—first dropping like a stone—
Comes rippling up the top with steady pace
To catch a stalk or feather floated down,
For some deep hidden use conceived by him alone.

2.

And hither, when the day is faint with heat,
At noontide comes the crimson butterfly,
And sips the stream, and rests his downy feet
Upon the giant dock-leaf cool and dry,
A hair's-breadth from its shadow noiselessly
Hung o'er the smoothness of a little bay;
Or, on the yellow bull-cup, standing high
In the mid-s: am, he makes a lingering stay,
While his deep-coloured wings do ope and shut
alway.

3.

And many buzzing things pass to and fro
In the dead warmth and stillness glancing bright:
Green gaddies, and the slender mosquito,
And gossamers that cannot keep their flight
Against a breathing air, however light,
But are down-beaten on the water straight;
When the brown dace comes up with snapping
bite,
And darts away, nor ever doth he wait
To look if it be fly, or angler's silken bait.

4.

The mill hath been asleep a week or more,
The feeble stream moves not the crazy wheel,
The sacks are ranged upon the dusty floor,
The miller cannot make a pinch of meal;
The crimson-spotted trout and wriggling eel,
When they the stroke and clatter cannot hear,
Among the half-sunk paddles boldly steal,—
A moment darkling, then in sunshine clear
Mix with the silver tribes that swarm the lower
weir.

5.

And further down, ye find a wooden bridge,
And round the piles the floating grasses sweep
In slowly; and beyond the sedge
The willow's blotched leaves hang down and
weep,

And swifter current doth the river keep
Upon the wooden flooring green and grey,
Where the thin bleak in shadow glance and leap;
And here, down-musing on a sunny day,
The bridge and firmset earth seem gliding fast
away.

6.

And further still, towards the brackish creek,
After long winding in the pleasant meads,
The winter snipe digs in his pointed beak
To find a worm that in the clay-bank breeds;
And pleasant is it in the tall grass seeds
To lay thy face, and let the hours go by,
And hear the barble sucking in the reeds,
Or, in the river gaze on the deep sky,
And see the little clouds move up it silently.

LAUGHING GULLS.

ONE would imagine that by this time every one of our British birds must have been so frequently and minutely described that it would be supererogatory to single out any one of them for notice. But, strange to say, the bird whose vernacular name heads this sketch, and which is known to naturalists under the more high-sounding title of "*Larus ridibundus*," or Black-headed Gull, although it has many claims on our special notice, has never yet, as far as I can ascertain, been introduced to our intimate acquaintance.

True, in all the chief works on ornithology, the portrait, a likeness more or less, accompanied by a minute and scientific description of its personal appearance, may be found; but of its peculiar habits—as observed during its periodical visits to our island—no account at all, full or exact, has hitherto been given. Dr. Stanley, formerly Bishop of Norwich, in his work on British Birds, has devoted a page or two to a notice of the Laughing Gull; and Mr. St. John, in his *Wild Sports of the Highlands*, has given a graphic account of its haunts in Scotland. But, the locality where, during its spring and summer residence with us, it assembles in the greatest numbers, and affords the most constant opportunities for observation, seems completely to have escaped the notice of ornithologists.

In the parish of Scoulton, situated nearly in the centre of the county of Norfolk, is a small picturesque lake, containing about seventy acres of water. It is surrounded on all sides by deep plantations of spruce and Scotch fir, and is dotted with about half a dozen small islands, adorned by trees of the same kinds.

Nearly in the middle of the mere, is an island of far greater extent, many acres in dimension, which is chiefly bog, varying in density, and covered in some parts with long coarse grass and sedges; in others, by reed-beds of great extent. This island, which is locally termed the *Hearth*, forms, from March to the beginning of August, the residence and breeding-place of the Laughing Gull.

The 7th of March, which is a fair-day at the small neighbouring town of Hingham, is the

day on which the residents in the neighbourhood begin to expect their visitors. If the weather be open during the last few days of February, small parties of these birds may be seen, from twelve to twenty in number, soaring at a vast height over the mere, apparently fulfilling the duties of scouts, sent on to examine into the state of affairs before the migration of the main body. If their report be favourable, on or about the 7th of March the air is filled with the clamorous cries of the gulls, as they arrive, after their long flight over sea and land, in view of their long-accustomed haunt.

The punctuality of this migration, under ordinary circumstances of weather, is most remarkable, and has before now afforded to a neighbouring clergyman an illustration of the text: "The stork in the heaven knoweth her appointed time; and the turtle, the crane, and the swallow, observe the time of their coming." When the season has been exceptionally severe, they have not arrived en masse till a fortnight later; occasionally the delay has been longer. When they have fairly settled for the season, Scoulton Mere becomes a scene of great animation. During the day, the majority of the birds are absent on foraging expeditions; but as evening draws on, they assemble from every quarter, and the sound of their united clamour is distinctly audible, in calm weather, at two miles' distance.

It is a strange sight, to persons unacquainted with the haunts and habits of these gulls, on passing through the neighbourhood to see hundreds of them following the plough, so greedily occupied in devouring the grubs it exposes to view, and so little terrified by the proximity of man, as to sit or walk tranquilly in a long line upon the last made furrow, until the next approach of the team compels them to move, in order to escape being trampled beneath the feet of the horses.

Still more picturesque is the scene when (as is often the case) a flock of gulls is intermixed with a flock of rooks, the snowy plumage of the one contrasting strikingly with the glossy black feathers of the others.

Good friends to the farmer are the Laughing Gulls. The chief object of their search, on occasions like that above described, is the grub of the cockchafer, which they devour wholesale with infinite relish, thus to a great extent nipping that pest in the bud. And not only in the helpless form of the grub does the cockchafer fall a prey to their ravenous beaks, but in its winged and mature state as well.

On many a summer night, with a young moon half illuminating the nearer parts of the landscape, have I watched, for half an hour together, the rapid, noiseless, and apparently playful motions of half a dozen gulls, as they circled round a spreading and lofty oak, in full chase of their unattractive prey, appearing in the silence and darkness more like white-winged phantoms than fowls of the air.

About the middle of April, sometimes a little earlier or a little later, they scratch a rough hollow in the tops of the tussocks, which

erect themselves at short intervals upon the Hearth, and there deposit their eggs. These have a remarkable tendency to "sport" in varieties widely different, both in size and colouring. The most usual size is a little less than that of an ordinary hen's egg, and more gradually pointed toward the lesser end, while the most common hue is of a dusky olive brown, irregularly blotched with a darker shade. But eggs are frequently found from the size of a pigeon's to that of a bantam, occasionally diminishing to the proportions of the egg of a thrush.

These eggs are a very marketable commodity, and the operations attending their collection and sale are carried on in a most business-like manner by a keeper to whom this charge is entrusted. Twice in the week, men provided with long water-boots, and each armed with a long pole, proceed to the Hearth, and visit the nests in systematic order. Several thousands are thus weekly collected, which find ready purchasers at the price of one shilling a score: indeed, the demand usually far exceeds the supply. Rumour asserts that in the London markets they are sold, at a profit of many hundred per cent, as *plovers' eggs*. They are eaten cold, in a hard-boiled state, and are deservedly esteemed as great delicacies.

When this plundering of the nests has been carried on as long as is consistent with safety, the birds are left undisturbed in the enjoyment of their breeding-place, and in a few weeks' time the surface of the mere is dotted with dark little balls of down, swimming and diving in all directions in precocious mimicry of their parents. Early in July, the young birds attain sufficient powers of flight to enable them to accompany the elders on their visits to the ploughed fields in the vicinity of their birthplace. Now is the time to visit the mere, to appreciate the singular aspect it presents when tenanted by its noisy summer visitors.

Rowing quietly along till within a hundred yards of the Hearth, you raise an oar perpendicularly, and drop the blade flat upon the water. Instantly, a dense white cloud rises from the island, and, with piercing cries and threatening gestures, the innumerable occupants fill the air overhead and all around.

So rapid and sudden are their evolutions, and so vast are their numbers, that one is constantly expecting to see collisions take place among them; but with command of wing equal to that of the swallow, they wheel

In and out
And round about,

as if delighting in the display of their own dexterity.

But August approaches: their object in coming hither is accomplished, and they begin to think of returning. One morning the dwellers in the cottages bordering on the mere, awake to find the clamour so long familiar to their ears, hushed and gone. A mysterious instinct has called the gulls back to their northern home, and, save a few of the old and decrepid, or the young and feeble, unable to join in the migra-

tion, the mere is left in peace to the stately swans and the lurking coot and moorhen.

The Norfolk people call these birds "puets:" a name probably derived from one inflection of their voice, which is not dissimilar to the cry of the lapwing. In some parishes at a few miles' distance they have obtained the name of "Sunday birds," from a curious combination of cause and effect. On Sunday, of course, no ploughs are at work, and in the absence of feeding-ground near home, the gulls are driven to cater for themselves at a greater distance.

The winter habitat of the black-headed gull has not been very clearly or satisfactorily ascertained. One thing I can bear witness to; that they start in a direction bearing north-east, and return from the same quarter. In the early spring of 1855, I observed, at a point on the Norfolk coast, a few miles south of Cromer, large flocks of these birds coming from seaward, and flying low and wearily over the land. On another occasion, while cruising on the Broads, which are situated in the north-east part of the county, I observed large parties of them (apparently taking some refreshment on their way out) wading in the marshes by the water-side.

Enough has, I trust, been suggested in this imperfect sketch, to introduce these interesting birds to the better acquaintance of lovers of nature. The fact of sea-fowl coming regularly, year by year, to breed in the heart of a highly-cultivated agricultural county, is in itself worthy of observation and remark.

A TRIAL OF JEWRY.

Don't talk to me about November! Don't point with triumphant finger to your Lettis's Diary, or hunt out that Almanack which the never-dying Francis Moore, Physician, still persists in producing in alternate black and red letter, and which he calls *Fox Stellarum*! They may make this present month November, if they like; it comes after October and precedes December, I know; but I am not to be put down by mere book-learning and meteorological statistics. I go by the weather, and I see no fog, no Scotch mist, no heavy atmosphere, and incessant rain, which, as a Briton, I have a right to expect; produce for me, if you please, that pea-soup cloud, which, descending on earth, immediately gives rise to an epidemic of "spleen," and causes men to attach themselves to lamp-posts and hurl themselves from bridges! I defy you. I decline to accept your—even to my ignorant mind—unscientific explanation of there being "a peg out" in the harmony of the seasons, or that "something has slipped" in the grand mechanism; but, I am with you in your avowal that an April morning has accidentally "turned up" in the middle of the dreary autumn, and very much regret that "a previous engagement," to use the language of society's vortex, prevents my enjoying it as I should wish.

I ought to stop here in my garden for at least an hour more on this Sunday morning, lolling

about, and patting my dog's big head, and caressing the cold nose which he thrusts into my hand as he walks gravely by my side, and gazing vacantly but with great delight over the broad green meadows and the purple-tinted cultivated land; over the fertile pastures and the big sweeping gardens, so trimly kept; over the red-roofed houses and the well-thatched ricks, and the tiny threads of the silver Brent, and the whole glorious landscape that lies between me and Harrow Church far away on the horizon. The church bells are silent yet, and there is not one sound to break the stillness. Looking over the hedge (which within the last few days has become very bare and ragged, and which has concentrated all its few remaining leaves on one spot, like an elderly gentleman conscious of baldness), I see the farm horses keeping holiday by blundering gravely over their pasture-field, only diversifying their never-wearying amusement of cud-chewing by an occasional grave and decorous roll upon their backs, from which they arise with a very astonished look around, and an apparent consciousness of having been betrayed into a temporary abnegation of dignity; I see the ducks all gathered together in a cluster at one corner of the pond in a farm-yard, and the geese, who immediately take affront at Nero's appearance, and hiss, like a theatrical manager's friends who have come in with orders and don't get front places; and—woe is me!—crossing the edge of the farm-yard, by the footpath in the Fair Meadow, I see the vicar of the parish, who gives me a cheery "Good morning," and, pointing towards the church, says he shall see me presently. Which statement is, though my excellent friend doesn't know it, the reverse of truth! He will not see me presently! To-day, the square pew with the red-covered seats, and the hassocks which want binding, and always go off like dusty fireworks whenever they are touched, will not contain me. To-day, the charity children who sit behind us, will sniff unscared by my occasional remonstrative glances; to-day, the clerk will have it all his own way with the responses, and the vicar will miss his churchwarden; for, as I have before remarked, I have a previous engagement, and as I have not before remarked, I am going to make a trial of Jewry.

For the first time for many years, but not for the first time in my life. My first trial of Jewry was, if I mistake not, in connexion with a pressing call for money on my part, and the production of a stamped piece of paper on the part of Jewry. Ten pounds was the sum required; but after Jewry—sitting in his own private house in Burton-crescent—had read the letter of introduction which I presented to him (and which had been given me by Uptree, of the Tin-tax Office), and had made me sign the stamped paper acknowledging myself his debtor for twelve pounds, "value received," he proceeded to explain that he had only a five-pound note in the house. Aghast at this information, I asked him what I was to do. He frankly confessed he did not know; at length, smitten with a

sudden idea, he pointed to an oil-painting of a Spanish boy, which stood against the wall, and told me I might "take the Murillo." I represented to Jewry that my want was money, not Murillos; upon which he suggested the pledging of the Murillo for five pounds. "Dicks 'll do it for you in a minute," Jewry said. "Here, Dicks!" And Dicks presenting himself in the shape of a very evil-looking clerk, was told to take "that round the corner," and to bring five pounds back. Dicks returned in three minutes without the Murillo, and with three pounds, which was all, he said, he could get for it. As Jewry handed me the money, he said, "About the ticket, now? That's no use to you! You'll never take the picture out, and if you did, you wouldn't know what to do with it! Come; I'll give you ten shillings for the ticket!" And he did; and eight pounds ten was all I ever got for my twelve pound bill, which I had to pay at the end of a month.

But the trial of Jewry which I am now about to make is of a very different kind. It involves my leaving behind me my watch and my purse, my putting on an unobtrusive garb and a wide-awake hat, my stealing out at the back gate so as to be unobserved by the servants, and my making the best of my way to an adjacent railway station. There, after a minute's interval, I am picked up by a train all blossoming with male and female specimens of "Sunday out," and, after making a circuitous journey, calling at Kentish Town and Hampstead Heath, dallying in that Utopia the Camden-road, flitting from Kingsland to Hackney, glancing at Victoria Park, and getting a glimpse of distant masts at Stepney, I am landed at Fenchurch-street, scud rapidly down Billiter-street and St. Mary Axe, and, opposite Bishopsgate Church, into which are crowding the denizens of the neighbourhood, find my intended companions awaiting my arrival. Two in number are my companions; one, Oppenhardt, my friend, whose innate patrician feelings were outraged by having allowed himself to come east of Temple Bar, and who was standing, with an acute expression of hurt dignity in every feature, contemplating the back of Inspector Wells, who was to be our guide in the trial of Jewry which we were about to make. As I crossed the road, I looked at those two men and mused, for twenty seconds by the clock, upon the falsity of appearances. There was Oppenhardt—whose paternal grandfather was, I believe, a worthy German sugar-baker at Hamburg—looking with his blue great coat, and his black beard, and his perpetual expansion of nostril, like a peer of the realm at the very least; and there was Inspector Wells, a pallid round-faced man, with a light fringe of whisker, and a sleepy boiled eye, and a stout idle figure; and yet I believe the Custom House possesses no clerk having a more acute knowledge of drawback and rebate, of allowances and landing-dues, than Oppenhardt; nor has the City of London Police an officer so sharp and painstaking, so unwearied and intelligent, as Inspector Wells. With very few words I

make my companions known to each other, and then, obedient to the inspector's suggestion, we cross the road and prepare for our plunge. "It's going with the stream, gentlemen," says our guide, "and taking the rough with the smooth. You've brought nothing of any value with you, I suppose? Handkerchiefs in an inside pocket, if you please! You'll soon see why!" "Do they know you, Wells?" I asked. "Some of 'em, sir; but not all. I thought of putting on my uniform coat, but then they'd have made way, and you'd have seen the place under rather a false view, perhaps! It's better we should rough it with the rest."

As he finished his sentence, we turned short round to the right, up a street called Sandys-row, and were in the thick of it. Jewry, which I have come to make trial of, lies in the heart of the City of London, in the corner of the angle made by Bishopsgate-street and Houndsditch. In the midst of it stands a huge black block of building, for the most part windowless but crane-bearing, and having odd trap-doors, some near the roof, some near the basement, for the swallowing in or giving out of goods. For this is where the defunct Company which had its head-quarters in the Street of the Hall of Lead—the Company which had an army and a navy of its own, and ruled kings and princes, but which has now dwindled down into a mere appanage of Downing-street, and has shrunk into a "Board"—used in the old days to store the costly silks which had been brought from its dominions in the far Ind. This hideous building was then filled with the rarest specimens of Eastern handicraft, and looked then just as it looks now, when, from its appearance, you would guess that turmeric, or sago, or starch, or anything equally common-place, was its contents. Round it seethes and bubbles Jewry, filling up the very narrow street, with small strips of pavement on either side, and what ought to have been a way for vehicles, between them; every bit of space, however, covered with mob—dirty, pushing, striving, fighting, high-smelling, higgling, chaffering, vociferating, laughing mob. Shops on either side, so far as can be seen above mob's head; tool-shops, files, saws, adzes, knives, chisels, hammers, tool-baskets, displayed in the open windows whence the sashes have been removed for the better furtherance of trade; doors open, sellers and buyers hot in altercation, spirited trade going on. Hatters, hosiers, tailors, bootmakers' shops, their proprietors forced by competition to leave the calm asylum of their counters, and to stand at their doors uttering wholesome incitement to the passers-by to become purchasers: not to say importuning them with familiar blandishments. For, in what should be the carriage-way is a whole tribe of peripatetic vendors of hats, hosiery, clothes, and boots, hook-nosed oleaginous gentry, with ten pair of trousers over one arm and five coats over the other; with Brobdingnagian boots (some with the soles turned uppermost, showing a perfect armoury of nails), which are carried on a square piece of board, and which look harder

than the board itself; a few hats; an enormous number of cloth caps of all shapes and sizes—made, so Wells tells me, from the skirts or otherwise unworn parts, of old coats. Jewry will stand any trial you like to make of her, in the way of actual requirements, I'll warrant it. Are you in search of mental pabulum? Here it is! Trays full of literature of all kinds, gaudily bound books of shilling lore, or tattered copies of the Hebrew Law. Engravings, coloured or plain? Here shall you see how Herr Jakobs in the Hoher Strasse, Berlin, has copied, or thinks he has copied, some old English prints of fox-hunting scenes; and here shall you see the marvellous horses, and the more marvellous riders, and the more marvellous leaps which the German artist has probably evolved from the depths of his internal consciousness, as his countryman did the camel; here shall you see Abraham offering up Isaac: the former in all the glory of the grand old Jewish type, dignified and bearded, than which, when good, there is scarcely anything better; but Isaac a little too nose-y, and rather too oily, and considerably too lip-py, and, on the whole, too much like the young Jew-boy who just now tried to steal a bit of liver out of that frying-pan in which a quantity of it is hissing, and who so nearly received in his eye the point of the steel fork which the Jewish maiden watching over it earnestly prodded at that feature. For, eating is by no means neglected in Jewry; in the glassless windows of many of the houses, the frying-pans are hard at work, presided over by Jewry's daughters, bright-eyed, dark-skinned, nimble-fingered, shrill-tongued. Pleasant to look upon are Jewry's daughters, despite a certain oiliness, which is probably attributable to contact with the contents of the frying-pan; it is in the contemplation of Jewry's mammas that you begin to doubt the beauty of the race. For, when you behold Jewry's mammas in the flesh, you generally behold them in rather too much of it, and they have an objection to buttons and hooks-and-eyes, and other ligaments; a hatred of corsets and chemisettes, and other womanly neatnesses; a tendency to bulge, and an aversion to soap and water—all of which peculiarities detract from their charms in the impartial eye (meaning mine).

Liver and fried fish are the principal, but by no means the only, edible articles for sale; through the crowd come wending men with glass dishes on their heads, containing long gelatinous-looking fruits. "Pickled cucumbers," says Wells, as they pass; "pickled cucumbers, never ate by anybody but Jews, and never seen elsewhere; they're said to be reg'lar good eating, but I never heard tell of a Christian who tried one. But the Jews—Lor' bless you!—they hold 'em in their fists, and bite away at 'em like boys do at lollipops!" Wells also tells me that pickles of every kind are in high favour in Jewry, that the denizens thereof will eat pickles at any time, no matter whether onions, cauliflower, cabbage, or what not, and will drink the pickle-liquor "as you would a glass of sherry." I think I can understand this. I

can imagine that a pickle must be, in some conditions, a fine setter-up! Say, at a bargain, for instance! How, just before asking your price, a fine stinging acrid pickle, must sharpen your faculties, and clear your brain, and set your nerves, and string your persuasive powers! How, if you be purchaser, it must lower your tone and your aspects of human life, and degrade the article in your views, and render you generally unpleasant and morose and disinclined to deal, and so, eventually, successful! No wonder pickles are at a premium in Jewry!

All this time we are slowly struggling through the crowd, which, never ceasing for an instant, surges round us, reminding one more of an illumination-night mob in its component parts than anything else. And it is curious to see how the itinerant vendors of goods, be they of what sort they may—whether sham jewellery, cheap music, pipes and cigars, bullfinches, boxes of dominoes, bird-whistles, or conjuring tricks—are whirled about in the great vortex of humanity; now, in the midst of their "patter," caught upon a surging wave and carried away long past those whom they were but this moment in the act of addressing. So, we pass through Cutler-street and Harrow-alley, borne along with scarcely any motion of our own, the crowd behind us pushing, the crowd before us shoving; and we, by dint of broad shoulders and tolerable height, making our way with occasional drifting into out-of-the-way courses, but always looked after by Inspector Wells. I don't suppose there is the smallest danger of our coming to grief, for, indeed, I never saw a better-behaved mob; thieves there are in scores, no doubt, from burly roughs with sunken eyes and massive jaws, sulkily elbowing their way through the mass, to "gonophs" and pickpockets of fourteen or fifteen, with their collarless tightly-tied neck-handkerchiefs, their greasy caps, and "aggrawator" curls—indeed, we have not been in the crowd two minutes, before Oppenhardt has the back pockets of his great-coat turned inside out, and I have felt myself carefully "sounded" all over by a pair of lightly-touching hands. But there is no ribaldry, no blackguardism, no expression of obnoxious opinion. One gentleman, indeed, wants to know "who those collared blokes is," in delicate allusion to our clean shirts; but he is speedily silenced; and one Jewish maiden, who, with much affection, addresses us as "dears," and advises us to "take care of our pockets," is sternly rebuked by an elderly matron, who says, "Let 'em alone—if they comes here, they must suffer." But, generally, Mob is thoroughly good tempered. Mob like Oppenhardt very much, and make numerous inquiries as to what he'll take for his beard, where he lives when he is at home, whether he ain't from furrin' parts, brother to the Princess Hallexandry, a Rooshan, &c. One young gentleman, with a potato-can, points to his fruit, and says, invitingly, "'Ave a tightener, captin.'" at which Oppenhardt is pleased. Mob is more familiar with me, as being humbler, and more akin to its own order; in one tremendous struggle, a lad puts his arms round

me and cries out, "Here we are! All together, guv'nor!"

So, onward with the stream, catching occasional glimpses of Hebrew inscriptions against the walls, endless repetitions of a handbill issued by the Jewish Society for the Diffusion of Knowledge, and announcing a Sabbath lecture by Brother Abrahams over Brother Lazarus recently deceased, noticing here and there huge rolls of edible stuff hung up called "swoss," which is apparently divided by the thinnest line of religious demarcation from sausage-meat; onward amidst constant cries of "Pockets, pockets, take care of your pockets!" and occasional rushes, evidently for pocket-picking purposes, until we make our way to where the crowd becomes even denser, and our progress is slower and harder to fight for, until at last, down a very greasy step, we make our entrance into the Clothes Exchange. This is a roofed building, filled round every side and in the centre with old clothes stalls; and here, piled up in wondrous confusion, lie hats, coats, boots, hobnailed shoes, satin ball-shoes, driving-coats, satin dresses, hoops, brocaded gowns, flannel jackets, fans, shirts, stockings with clocks, stockings with torn and darned feet, feathers, parasols, black silk mantles, blue kid boots, Belcher neckerchiefs, and lace ruffles. This is to what my lady's wardrobe comes, Horatio; this is the anti-penultimate of flounce and furbelow, of insertion-tucker and bishop-sleeve. Mamselle Prudence has my lady's leavings, and Abigail looks after her perquisites, and thus the trappings of fashion come down to Jewry, and are refreshed and retouched, sponged and lacquered and refaced, and take their final leave of life amid the fashionable purlieus of Whitechapel, or the nautical homes of the blessed at Shadwell. No lack of customers here; stalwart roughs being jammed into tight pea-jackets by jabbering salesmen, who call on the passers-by to admire the fit. "Plue Vitney, ma tear! Plue Vitney, and shticksh to him like his shkin, don't it?" "Who could fit you if I can't!" "Trai a vethkit, then!"—this to me—"a thplendid vethkit, covered all over with thilver thripes!" While, after declining this gorgeous garment, I find Oppenhardt in the clutches of a lithe-fingered Dalilah, who is imploring him to let her sell him "thutch a thirt!" Everywhere the trade is brisk, and the sales progress through an amount of fierce argument, verbal and gesticulatory, which would be held fatal to business anywhere else in London, but which is here accepted as a part of the normal condition of commerce.

In and out of the rows of stalls we dived, Wells in front, recognised occasionally, sometimes by a tradesman seated in solemn dignity at his stall, who insists on a friendly hand-shake. Sometimes the inspectorial presence is acknowledged by a sly nod or a wink, as much as to say, "No uniform! Then you don't want to be much noticed! How are you?" and sometimes by a half-chaffing shout of "Vot, is it you, Thargeant! now'th your time for a hover-coat!" We see plenty of public-houses, all with Jewry signs, and

we suggest to Wells that, being half suffocated, perhaps we ought to have "something" after this protracted struggle and the swallowing of this dust? But he says, "Not yet, sir;—in a jewel-house!" and with that mysterious hint proceed we to clear the way out of the Exchange.

In a jewel-house! As I ponder on the words, my mind rushes away to the regalia in the Tower and Colonel Blood's attempt thereon; to Hunt and Roskell's shop, and the Queen of Spain's jewels, which were in the old Exhibition of '51; to the Palais Royal at Paris, and the Zeil at Frankfort; to a queer street at Amsterdam, where I once saw a marvellous collection of jewellery; to a queer man whom I once met in a coffee-shop, who told me he "travelled in emeralds;" to Sindbad's Valley of Diamonds, and—Wells breaks my reverie by touching my arm; I follow him across a square, in the centre of which are several knots of men in discussion; opposite us stands the door of "The Net of Lemons," apparently closed, but it yields to Wells's touch; and, following him up a passage, I find myself in a low-roofed square-built comfortable room. Round three sides of it are ranged tables, and on these tables are ranged large open trays of jewellery. There they lie in clusters, thick gold chains curled round and round like snakes, long limp silver chains such as are worn by respectable mechanics over black satin waist-coats on Sundays, great carbuncle pins glowing out of green velvet cases, diamond rings and pins, and brooches and necklaces. Modest emeralds in quaint old-fashioned gold settings, lovely pale opals, big finger rings made up after the antique with cut cornelian centre-pieces, long old-fashioned earrings (I saw nothing in any of the trays in modern settings), little heaps of loose rubies, emeralds, and turquoises, set aside in corners of the trays, big gold and silver cups and goblets and trays and tazzas, here and there a clumsy old épergne, finger-rings by the bushel, pins by the gross, watches of all kinds, from delicate gold Genevas down to the thick turnip silver "ticker" associated with one's school-days, and shoals of watchworks without cases. "They've melted down the cases," says Inspector Wells to me in a fat whisper, "and can let the works go very cheap." Such trade as is being done is carried on in a very low tone; the customers, nearly all of whom are smoking cigars, bend over the trays and handle the goods freely, sometimes moving with them in their hands to another part of the room, to see them in a better light, and the vendors making not the least objection.

I thought I noticed a whisper run round as we entered, but the sight of Wells was sufficient, and no further notice was taken. We were afterwards told, however, that a stranger is generally unceremoniously walked out, and informed that "it's a private room." After a few moments we were introduced by Inspector Wells to Mr. Marks, the landlord of the house, who wore a pork-pie hat, and had a diamond brooch in his shirt, and two or three

splendid diamond rings on his not too clean hands, and whose face struck me as being one of the very knowingest I have ever met with. Very affable was Mr. Marks, answering all my questions in the readiest manner. No! he didn't consider it a full morning; you see, the great diamond sale at Amsterdam was on just now, and many of his frequenters were away at it. Had any great bargains been made that morning? Well, there had been a set of diamonds brought in, which were sold about ten o'clock for seventeen hundred pounds, and which, up to the present time (it was now about twelve), had been re-sold in the room nine times, and each time at a profit. Some men had made two pounds profit, some three, one as much as thirteen pounds—but each had re-sold his diamonds at a profit. "That's the way with our people!" said Mr. Marks; "anything for a deal! We mustn't have a deal, and in a deal we mustn't have a little profit. Last week I had a thousand pound worth transaction—I re-thold the goods the same day. Vot was my profit? Fifty pound? No! Then and thicpeth! Thill, there *was* a profit. Look here now" (pulling a handful of various coin, perhaps four pounds fifteen in value, out of his left-hand trousers-pocket), "that's vot I've made on my little transaction thith morning! Committhion money, I call it."

I asked Mr. Marks if there were any celebrated characters at that time in his house, and he begged us to walk into his sanctum: a cheery well-appointed kitchen, arrived at by passing through the bar. There he introduced us to Mr. Mendoza, one of the largest diamond merchants in the world, and a gentleman who had been consulted as to the cutting and setting of the Koh-i-noor. A quiet-looking man Mr. Mendoza, with a sallow complexion and an eye beaming like a beryl. Told by Mr. Marks that we are curious strangers without any objectionable motive, Mr. Mendoza was truly polite, and, on being asked if he had anything of price with him, produced from the breast-pocket of his over-coat a blue paper which looked like the cover of a Seidlitz powder, but which contained large unset diamonds to the value of four hundred and seventy-five pounds. As these were exposed to our view, Mr. Marks took from his waistcoat-pocket a glittering pair of fine steel pincers, and, selecting three or four of the largest diamonds, breathed upon them and then put them on one side, with a view to purchase. "You use pincers, I see, Mr. Marks?" I remarked. "Vell, thir!" says that urbanest of men, with a wink that conveys volumes, "fingerth is thtick, and dimonth cling to the touch. Mr. Mendoza knowth me and don't mind vot I do, but he wouldn't let everybody try his dimonth. You thee, the way to try a dimonth ith by breathin' on him. Vell, ven *thum* folkth trieth 'em, they inhaletth inthed of ekthalin, and thoveth out their tongueth at the thame time, tho that ven they putth their tongueth back again, there ain't quite tho many dimonth in the paper ath there voth at firht!" I asked Mr. Mendoza if he had ever been robbed, and he told me never.

Was he not well known? Yes! but he kept to the broad thoroughfares, and never went out at night. He showed us several other papers of diamonds of greater or less value, and several stones handsomely set in rings.

Hospitable intentions overcame Mr. Marks (a really sensible, good-natured, most obliging man), and he insists upon our having a bottle of wine. Clicquot, he proposes. We decline Clicquot, but as he will not be balked, and insists upon our "giving it a name," we stand sponsor to sherry. And very good sherry it is, and very good is Mr. Marks's talk over it. He tells us what sober people they are in Jewry, and how they never, by any chance, have more than one glass of brandy-and-water at a sitting; how they leave his rooms at two and go home to dinner, not returning until six in the evening, when they have coffee and sit down to whist, playing away till eleven; "when," says Mr. Marks, with a terrific wink in the direction of Inspector Wells, whose back happens to be turned, "when thith houth alwayth clotheth to the minute, accordin' to the Act o' Parlyment." Every word of which talk is, as the Inspector afterwards pithily informs me, "kidment:" a pleasant dissyllable, meaning, I believe, in pure Saxon, playful flight of fancy.

TRIFLES FROM CEYLON.

BEFORE SIR EMERSON TENNENT wrote his masterly book on Ceylon, he would have been a bold man who would have ventured to state in general society in England, that one gentleman shot twelve hundred elephants himself; and yet it is perfectly well known in Ceylon that Major Rogers did so. Two gentlemen, whose names need not be mentioned, were at an evening party in England a good many years ago, when one of them happened to narrate some of his sporting adventures in Ceylon. Mortified by observing some marks of incredulity in his hearers, he appealed to his companion to corroborate his statements; but to his great surprise, and the amusement of the company, his friend in an off-hand, half-jesting, half-serious manner, begged him not to call on *him* to support any of his marvellous tales, and turned the conversation into another channel. As soon as they had left the house, the disconcerted story-teller asked his companion why he had thus deserted him, instead of corroborating what he well knew to be true? "My dear fellow," said the other, taking him by the arm, "did you not see that nobody believed you? Had I stood by you, they would only have said there was a *pair* of us. Take my advice, and tell no more elephant stories while you remain in England, for you will never be believed."

In spite of this caution, I purpose jotting down from time to time such incidents as I have come across during a lengthened sojourn in Ceylon, or which I have heard from others; also, to give some account of the animals to be met with in that island.

I do not profess to be a sportsman, in the usual acceptation of the word. I am fond of my gun, as a provocative to exercise, and as a means of amusement and recreation in the lonely out-stations where a great part of a civilian's life is often spent. But I object to the wanton and uncalled-for destruction of animal life. Although I would not shun an encounter with any animal when meeting him on fair terms, and would always, and do always seek it, when I know that he may do injury to the lives or property of others, or even when any part of him can be turned to use, still I have no sympathy with the persistent pursuit of elephants in places remote from the haunts of men, merely that they may be shot and left dead on the ground, for the boar and the jackal to devour. But I know many excellent men who do not take the same view of the case; and, without arguing the merits thereof, it may not be uninteresting by-and-by to note down some of their adventures.

Treating of the "Trifles" in the way of animal life that are every-day affairs in Ceylon, let us begin with Alligators. The river alligator attains to a large size; they have been seen as long as eighteen feet; these are formidable customers, but in most of the tanks, in the northern part of the island, alligators are more properly crocodiles, and literally swarm, varying from seven to nine feet only. These, though destructive to cattle, deer, and dogs, are generally very shy of man, and will not attack him, even in the water. They may easily be caught by attaching a baited hook to a float. The alligator devours the bait, and then swims off to the middle of the tank with the float. In the morning the float is drawn ashore in a canoe, and the alligator is hauled ashore, and despatched by a ball in the shoulder. The flesh is very white and tender-looking. Some of the cocoa-nut planters catch them in order to manure their trees with the carcases. They are exceedingly partial to dogs, and are the terror of the huntsman. The spotted deer, when pursued and hard pressed, usually takes to the water; the dogs (greyhounds, or Australian kangaroo hounds) follow in hot pursuit, regardless of the shouts of the huntsman, who frantically yells from the bank. Suddenly a monster's head rises to the surface, and a noble hound disappears beneath the water. An alligator has seized him. I was one day riding by a tank when I saw a deer emerge from the jungle, pursued by two pariah dogs, and take to the water. I rode towards the tank, but before I reached it, I saw the deer struggle up the opposite bank, with an alligator hanging on to its shoulders. The alligator dragged back its victim, and when I reached the spot where I had seen the struggle, only the circling ripples remained to tell the deed that was going on below, while around could be seen the tops of the heads of several other alligators waiting until the successful one had finished his deed of darkness, and ready to come to the rescue should the deer shake off its captor. I succeeded in attracting the attention of some cottagers, and caused them

to shout, and try to alarm the alligator, while I rode over to the spot where I had seen the ripple last, in hopes I might succeed in inducing him to quit his prey. But I was too late. So, in shooting ducks, it is often very annoying to find an alligator gobble one up you have shot, and are going to pick up, before you can get hold of it.

The following tragedy, which occurred on the sixth of September last, will show that the river alligator is occasionally a dangerous trifle. A stout young man, aged eighteen, was washing his face by the water-side, when suddenly an alligator emerged from some bushes growing in the water and seized him by the calf of the leg. The young man seized the branch of an overhanging tree, and cried out for assistance, and a desperate struggle ensued: the alligator trying to drag him away, while the man clung with the tenacity of desperation to the tree. At length the man's uncle, who was in the jungle close by, ran up, and with a stick belaboured the alligator, who, however, still held on, grunting at each blow he received. Finding that his blows were of no avail, the uncle drew a knife and stabbed the brute in the eye. This induced him to leave his hold for a moment, but it was only to seize his unfortunate victim once more, and now by the thigh. The uncle then inserted his knife into his jaws, and attempted to rip open his mouth, whereon the alligator left his hold and plunged into the water. The unfortunate youth was carried to Caltura, the nearest station, where medical aid was rendered him, but in vain; he died from loss of blood, his leg being lacerated in a manner too shocking for description.

Snakes are abundant in Ceylon, among the other trifles that environ a resident there.

Some persons never overcome their dread of these creatures, and other reptiles; but in general a short residence is sufficient to overcome this feeling. As to the smaller animals, such as centipedes, scorpions, and so forth, a stranger in Ceylon soon learns to take it for granted that they may be found wherever there is shelter for them. Consequently, care is always taken to keep boxes and other articles of household use in such positions that no opportunity may be afforded for noxious animals to lodge behind them. Boxes are invariably supported on legs, which prevents the white ants from commencing their insidious attacks unobserved, and destroying all the contents. Although, however, there are noxious reptiles in almost every house, and although it is not at all uncommon to see some one get up from his chair and squash a centipede that has just dropped from the roof, still accidents are comparatively rare. I have been a good many years in Ceylon, and yet I have only once been bitten by a centipede. He was a good sized fellow. He fell on me while asleep in a bed without curtains, and nipped me in the arm. It was some little time before I could get a light, and then I found my friend under the pillow, and transferred him to a bottle of spirits. The pain was sharp for a time, but subsided before long. Some persons suffer

agonies from the bite. Much depends on the constitution of the individual, and something on the part they attack. It is particularly unpleasant to get one down your back, and to find him trying to eat his way through you in half a dozen places. Some time ago I asked a dear old friend of mine, who used to rejoice in a grizzly beard, what he had done with it. "Shaved it off." "Why?" "Because a brute of a centipede got into it, and there he was, biting away, and I could not catch him."

I was staying at the house of a friend holding high office in the northern province, when, one evening after a shower of rain, he proposed to show me a few of the gentry that were in the habit of taking refuge with him when driven out of their own holes. He had seen one in the room a short while before, and had deferred killing him until I should come to be gratified. The specimen was an enormous black scorpion: a most disgusting brute, the impersonification of every hateful quality. He despatched him with a stiffish whip he kept for the purpose—the best thing to use, as it is pliable, and bends over a snake or other creature, while a stick can only touch him in one part. We then pursued our investigations. He laid hold of a door behind which something might be found, but immediately drew it back, for he had all but touched a large tarantula: another most unsightly beast. Elsewhere in the room we found one centipede, and in the verandah another; we then sat down by a table, and were chatting about the number of venomous animals we so often come across without their hurting us, and telling various small stories bearing on the subject, when suddenly I felt a sharp pair of claws seizing my foot. I jumped up with an exclamation, expecting to find a scorpion, "Only a black beetle!" I must admit that I never before or after saw so many vermin, at one time, in a house. It was a house but little raised from the ground, and the rain had driven the creatures out of their holes.

As to snakes, they will always get out of one's way if they can. Every one can speak of some narrow escape, and yet it seldom happens that any one is bitten. Twice, on nearly the same spot, did I drive over a deadly snake. It was near a coral wall at Point Pedro. One snake was a cobra, the other a *tic polonga*. My wife one day opened a drawer, and was going to put in her hand, when she saw a venomous snake lying coiled up in a basket. She remained quiet, and I despatched him with a stick. Some years previous, when still unmarried, she and another young lady, scrambling about the rocks at Trincomalee, at a pic-nic, found their feet within the coils of a python, which they had inadvertently disturbed in his sleep. The narrowest escape I ever had was at Point Pedro, where I placed my foot on a cobra *di capella*, and actually stood on him for an instant, while I could hear him beating the ground with the rest of his body. I suppose I must have trodden on his neck, so that he was unable to bite. It was in the evening, and two men who had pre-

ceded me a few yards, carrying a table which they were going to place in the open air, must have walked right over him. As soon as I discovered what I was standing on, I sprang forward, and called out, "I have trodden on a snake!" A light was brought, but nothing was to be seen, except the "trail" of a snake on the ground. After the house had been closed for the night, when I was going to bed, I saw a snake coiled up near a door. I went for a stick and despatched him. It turned out to be a cobra, between four and a half and five feet long. Evidently he had taken refuge within the house after I had trodden on him, and lay quiet behind the door. He had remained there without moving, while my wife and myself had been drinking some lemonade at a table within a few feet of where he lay. He had remained quiet and unnoticed when the servant shut the door, although he must have been exposed to light. And there he still was when my eye fell on him.

This dulness of many venomous snakes is a merciful arrangement, by which many a life is spared. The rat-snake, a harmless creature, very like the cobra, but without a hood, is a very active snake, and moves away with great rapidity. A house which we occupied a few months ago was much infested by snakes. Standing on the verandah one afternoon I saw a cobra deliberately move towards the house. Of course I at once put an end to him. Remembering what Sir Emerson Tennent says about snakes of this kind being generally found in couples, I was not surprised by the breathless announcement my little girl made on my return home some days afterwards. There was a fine banyan-tree in front of the house, into which the children used to climb and regale themselves with imaginary breakfasts—sumptuous curries of all kinds, sambals of delicious flavour, and other luxurious dishes, really made of gravel served up in cocoa-nut shells. It appeared that as they were there regaling themselves on one of these gorgeous repasts, Fanny had spied a cobra: on which they scrambled down the tree and alarmed the household, and the cook valiantly broke a door-bar over the cobra, and then dragged him by the tail out of a hole into which he was creeping; after which he was (I suppose from the natural love cooks have for roasting and boiling) cast into the fire and burnt. His head was, however, raked out of the ashes by the small fry, in corroboration of their story, and triumphantly shown me.

I used to be under the impression that if timely measures were taken, the effects of a snake-bite could always be averted; but the following melancholy instance shows that sometimes death ensues almost immediately. A groom and his wife were sleeping in the stable of a friend of mine, when a cobra bit the woman in the head. Probably the reptile had coiled himself near her for warmth, and the woman had, in her sleep, disturbed him. Immediately, the man carried her into his master's house; but before she had been in the room five minutes, death en-

sued. A coroner's inquest was held next day, and a post-mortem examination took place. My friend and I were in the same office, and the facts were received from his own lips; besides which, the depositions and the evidence of the medical men left no doubt that death did ensue with such frightful rapidity as to leave no time for trying remedies.

I am sceptical as to the virtues of the snake-stone. I have seen snake-charmers bitten, and have seen the stone applied, but there was no evidence of a satisfactory nature that the poison of that particular snake had not been extracted. On the other hand, there are many whose opinion is entitled to weight who believe in its efficacy.

One night a servant of mine was bitten by a snake, and seemed in great agony. The snake had escaped, so that no one could tell of what kind it was. The medical sub-assistant of the station used the lancet freely to the wound, and, if I remember right, cauterised it; the pain subsided after a few hours. The snake may, however, not have been a very venomous one. I remember one evening striking with my shoe at a cockroach, and bringing it down within a few inches of a deadly snake, which I had not observed before. Such incidents almost everybody can tell of. It proves, as before remarked, that a venomous snake is slow to use his fangs, and that very often we pass in ignorance quite close by these animals. Two gentlemen in the civil service of the island were out shooting together. A herd of deer was seen a short way off, and they commenced stalking them. One of the two, an old sportsman, wished to give his friend the first shot: so he whispered to him to advance first, while he followed a few paces in the rear. The foremost of the two, with eye intently fixed on the deer, advanced on tiptoe. His friend behind, to his intense horror, saw him put down his foot exactly over one of the most deadly snakes in the island, as it lay across his path. It was too late to warn him; but providentially, walking as he did on tiptoe, he trod so that the heel did not press on the reptile; he passed on, and so, unknown to himself, escaped deadly danger. A friend of mine was, while clearing some jungle, bitten by a venomous snake: whereupon he himself cut out the piece, applied some gunpowder, set it on fire, and allowed it to fizzle away on the wound. He experienced no permanent ill effects. A Singhalese toddy-charmer was once bitten in the finger by a deadly snake; on which he laid the finger against a tree, raised his sharp billhook, and with one blow severed the finger from the hand.

The lion and the Bengal tiger are unknown in Ceylon; but we have the cheetah, or more properly the leopard—another "Trifle" to be found there. These animals are very destructive to cattle, and are much dreaded on that account, but it is seldom that they attack man. There is now and then an instance of a cheetah carrying off a man while asleep, but it is exceedingly rare. It is only when wounded or attacked that a cheetah will fly at a man; as a general rule, he is a cowardly animal, and only

attacks the weak. He is exceedingly fond of dogs, and will sometimes pounce on one and carry him off close to his master's side, taking care however, to get away as soon as possible. At Newera Ellia, the mountain sanitarium of the island, where English hounds can live and thrive, elk hunting is a favourite amusement. Occasionally it happens that the dogs sight and attack a cheetah, and then sad havoc is made in the pack before the huntsmen can come up and drive away the cheetah, or call off the pack. Sir Emerson Tennent has related the fact which occurred at this place of a cow pounding to death a cheetah. The old cow was called Tickery Banda, after a Kandian chieftain, from whom a friend of mine had bought her, and was in charge of an Englishman at Newera Ellia. The extraordinary part of the story is, that the old lady had no horns; but what will not maternal affection do? The cheetah got into the shed where Mrs. Tickery Banda and her calf were, expecting to have an easy prey; but he reckoned without his hostess; Mrs. T. B. went at him tooth and nail—or rather head and horny protuberances—pounded him again and again against the walls, jammed him into a jelly, and left him so little life, that next morning, when the master opened the stable, the cheetah had scarcely any life left in him, and a shot from a pistol settled him. The old girl's nerves received a terrible shock, however, on this memorable occasion; for some time afterwards, she did not know friend from foe: or rather, she assumed every one to be a foe till the contrary was proved. She would rush at her dearest friend, rip and snort, and offer to pound him against an imaginary wall. Time, the great restorer, brought back repose to her overwrought mind, and it is believed that she died at peace with all mankind.

One afternoon not very long ago, a magistrate in the north of the island was told that a cheetah had wounded a woman in a village not far off, where never before had cheetah been heard of, and where, indeed, there was scarcely cover enough to hide a hare. He drove to the spot armed with a gun, and found that a woman had indeed been wounded by some animal or other. Her face and shoulders had been torn, but she was able to sit up and speak. The story was, that she had gone to an adjoining garden, when suddenly a cheetah sprang on her, clawed her, and left her. All the men who remained in the village were armed, many had left it, and the cheetah was apparently master of the position. On the gentleman's proceeding to a palmyra garden not far off, a cheetah was pointed out to him, lying with his head behind a tree in such a way that no vital part was exposed. Fearing he might run away if any attempt were made to get a better shot, the assailant advanced quietly until within twenty-five yards of him, and sent a ball through his flanks. Up sprang the cheetah with a series of growls between the bark of a dog and a monkey, and came at his foe, who covered him with his gun, resolved to give him the remaining barrel at

close quarters. The cheetah seemed to think better of it, however, for he stopped, and hung his head like a dog who tries to intimidate and fails; suddenly he pricked his ears, ran off to one side, and disappeared behind the tree. It would seem that he had caught sight of some of the natives who were running away, and resolved, coward as he was, to attack them. Next minute he reappeared within six paces of the gentleman, who threw up his gun, fired at him, and missed;—in a moment the cheetah sprang upon an unarmed young native who was standing behind his master with a loading rod, threw him down, clawed him, and made off. The young man was not much hurt—to all appearance—and after a few minutes two more balls were rammed down, and pursuit commenced. They had not to go far. Close by a house, the inmates of which had fled earlier in the day, lay the cheetah, pawing the air. Another ball, through the heart, settled him, and he was carried home in triumph.

On the very next day, a female cheetah and cub were seen in another village not far off, where they remained for three weeks at least. An opportunity was afforded of observing their habits when they have young, which does not often occur. It was evident that these animals had strayed from their usual haunts, and found themselves at break of day among the abodes of man. The attacks of the male were evidently in self-defence, and, had evening closed before he was killed, he would have left the village. The female and cub were apparently waiting for him. Soon after their arrival the mother killed a dog. The village in which they took up their abode was so entirely devoid of any game, that it is impossible they could have found any, yet, with the exception of that one dog, nothing of any kind was missed by the people during the remainder of their three weeks' stay. They used to sleep in the gardens of the people. I have myself seen their marks in the morning, and the places where, cat-like, they had scratched against the walls. A man would come out of his house and see the cheetah and cub in a tree close by; then he would run away; and, as soon as they saw him, they would run away. Their footprints were to be seen at the tanks, but it is my firm belief that during all that time they ate nothing, and were waiting for the male cheetah to bring them their food: the female devoting herself to the protection of the young one. Almost every day during that time, the before-mentioned gentleman tried to have a shot at them, but he never could succeed. There were many plantations of young palmyral trees in which they used to hide, and it is well known that a cheetah will lie almost as close as a partridge. At length, they seemed to get tired of waiting, and one morning they walked off. The people were at first terribly afraid, but after a time they began to think they were deities in disguise, as they hurt neither man nor beast. The effects of the male cheetah's attacks on the woman and man were remarkable. Although the young man had rejoined the party in pursuit,

and had been in at the death, and seemed but slightly hurt, he felt the effects next day in great prostration and pain. He and the woman were despatched to a hospital, where they remained for a long time; their wounds suppurated; those of the poor woman became frightful, and eventually death ensued. The young man recovered, but will bear the marks to his dying day. A cheetah's claws are as sharp as a dissecting-knife, and contain poisonous matter, which generally produces ill effects.

A MONOTONOUS "SENSATION."

A CERTAIN house at the corner of an obscure but tolerably respectable street in London was said to be troubled. The troublous signs were of the usual kind. Silks of the very best and stiffest quality were heard to rustle on the stairs, and their sound was varied with the clanking of chains. Doors, after they had been securely locked, banged loudly, and when their noise had attracted attention were found to be as securely locked as before. The windows, too, were given to clatter on the calmest nights, and bells that could only be rung from the parlour and the drawing-room tinkled unpleasantly after every one was in bed on the upper floors.

As to the cause of trouble reports differed. Some talked about an old man in a seedy black suit, who had once kept a school, but had lost it through caning a little boy too hard, and had killed himself by drinking as a necessary consequence. Others preferred the legend of an old woman, who, having accumulated enormous wealth (say 250*l.*), had devoted herself with unaccountable assiduity to the vocation of bone-picking, and after being missed for some time, had been found in her garret in a state of approaching decomposition, having, it seems, chosen that mysterious mode of departure for no other reason save a morbid desire to give the coroner a job. A tale, too, was afloat about an Irish labourer, whose head was turned by a heavy prize in the Austrian lottery, and who, in the frenzy of excitement, threw himself out of window, but as historical criticism proved that he lived two streets off, it was generally felt that his decease, lamentable as it might be in the eyes of his immediate friends, could scarcely affect a house in which he had never resided, and although it was proved that he had on one occasion repaired a breach in the chimney of the troubled domicile, such a very temporary connexion with the premises was clearly insufficient to establish a right of troubling. Public opinion, therefore, was divided between the old schoolmaster and the female bone-picker, nor was the objection that neither of these could have anything to do with chains or silks to be regarded as in the slightest degree valid. A stiff brocade and a hundred-weight of iron chain are the proper appurtenances of the ghost, as a ghost, when he or she designs to address the ear rather than the eye, and do not bear any reference whatever to the circumstances or voca-

tion of the deceased during his or her mortal career. If Mr. George Cruikshank had been aware of this he would not have attempted (being the thousand and first on the roll of those who have attempted) to refute the belief in ghosts, by arguing that clothed ghosts prove an unwillingness on the part of a pair of pantaloons to remain quietly in a chest of drawers, quite as great as that of a spirit to sleep within his allotted portion of the cemetery.

Such an unwillingness on the part of mere creations of the tailor would, as he properly urges, be absurd; but his argument melts into thin air when we show, not that clothes have ghosts, but that ghosts have their own spiritual wardrobe, often of a most costly material. Ask one of the estimable laundresses, who hurried their steps as they passed the awful domicile, whether they ever believed that Dirty Suke (the flattering name bestowed upon the bone-picker) on any occasion dreamed of diminishing her vast treasures by the purchase of a silk gown, and a laugh of derision would be the reply. Her rags fluttered lightly about her, as leaves in the autumn breeze, but that is no reason that the spiritual silk, wherewith her ghost increased its powers of annoyance, should not be of the richest sort. Suke, though in tatters, was always known to be a proud old gal, and if that did not entitle her ghost to wear brocade, what becomes of all argument on moral premises?

There were some sharp-sighted wights who, if their testimony were to be trusted, had not only heard but had actually seen objects of terror in the objectionable house. A lad of nineteen had seen a mourning coach and four horses issue from the chimney at midnight and run through the sky, leaving a trail of fire behind it; but as this had happened to be small in intellect and great in mendacity—often affirming that his aunt in Devonshire kept three live unicorns, and that his godfather had three millions of hard sovereigns in his money-box—his evidence was received with caution, even among the most credulous. A red-faced man, strange to the neighbourhood, who had seen the door suddenly open, and a white face peep out, was heard for a little while with considerable respect, but the force of his testimony was much weakened by the discovery that he was not at all clear about the house at which the phenomenon appeared. Of all the seers the most trustworthy was an old apple-woman, who confined herself to the general statement that she had once looked at the upper windows of the house, and had seen—something; for even the most sceptical could hardly reject this statement with utter disbelief. However, the stories about sights were on the whole less popular than those about sounds, and an elderly dame, who all her life had been a firm believer in the rustling silk, was one of the first to raise a shriek of incredulity when she heard of the white face and the mourning coach.

The effect of public opinion on the marketable value of the house was practical enough.

The owner of the property, who had tried to restore it to good repute by offering it for a short term of years at the low rent of nothing a quarter, with a clause that he himself would keep it in repair, could not, even on those easy conditions, find a permanent tenant, and had abandoned it in despair, so that for a long time the frontage exhibited a combination of smashed glass and accumulated dirt, that was quite sufficient to breed a collection of ghost stories, if none had been already in circulation. Gradually, indeed, the ghost itself had ceased to be the hero of popular romance, and the successive occupants, who one after another had tried the house for very short periods, stepped into the foreground. A lamplighter, who had taken the premises on the very reasonable conditions above described, had placed his lantern on the parlour floor, and saw that it cast a human shadow on the opposite wall without the aid of an intervening substance, was often the theme of discussion, and his assertion that he would not have remained in the house one night more for the Injies of gold, was frequently cited as a proof of a pious and unmercenary disposition. A journeyman baker, from whose bed the clothes were perpetually pulled, as soon as he began to doze off, was also regarded with universal commiseration, while the additional fact that his little boy had received a smart caning from an invisible hand, was recorded with triumphant glee by the schoolmaster's faction, though it was received with a doubtful smile by the party who voted for the bone-picking old woman. However, these and other tenants were quite as legendary as the ghost itself. No one seems to have known when the house had been inhabited by the lamplighter, and when the nocturnal rest of the baker had been disturbed. An old lady, whose cousin recollected the lamplighter as a fine man with sandy whiskers, was the sole link between the actual world and the earlier occupants of the troubled house.

These tenants, then, belonged to a mythical period, but as time passed on the house found an occupant, about whose existence there could not be the slightest doubt, and who eagerly took the premises at a rent which, though very moderate, was considerably higher than nothing. For the son of the extremely liberal landlord, conceiving that his father's policy had conducted rather to deteriorate than to improve the property, had often publicly declared that, rather than take less than 30*l.* per annum, he would let the troubled edifice remain empty till the day of judgment. The substantial occupant was a lively and very industrious Frenchman, who met all the tales of trouble with the irresistible argument that he had no time to waste upon such bêtises, adding that he would rather pay 30*l.* for the house with its chains and its silks than 50*l.* for a similar establishment without such incumbrances, and declaring that if the ghost took any liberties with his bed-clothes, a trial of physical force would be the speedy consequence.

Whatever the ghost did to the Frenchman, the latter held the premises for a considerable number of years, and afterwards retired to his native land, to be succeeded by a lawyer's clerk, who was succeeded by an auctioneer, who was succeeded by a Yankee speculator, who was succeeded by a melodramatic actor accustomed himself to play ghosts and demons in sensation-pieces, who was succeeded by somebody who used the premises for offices only, and did not care sixpence what happened upon them after nightfall, while he was in the enjoyment of rural tranquillity at Shacklewell. And thus the troubled house gradually became a very marketable property, not to be had for less than 60*l.* per annum, and a contract on the part of the tenant to execute all substantial repairs.

And this, of course, was the end of the ghost? Not at all. Through all the successive occupancies the ghost was as active and vigorous as ever, rustling, rattling, slamming, clattering, and casting shadows without the aid of a substance. Nay, popular rumour, far from being confuted, had actually been confirmed, for the Frenchman, the lawyer's clerk, the Yankee, the auctioneer, the actor, and the epicurean of Shacklewell (who on one occasion had remained after dark), had all heard, felt, or seen, something. Still, as we have said, the house had become a good marketable property.

One Christmas evening a number of young people were assembled in the drawing-room of the troubled house, celebrating the revels proper to the season with more than average hilarity, the chief promoter of mirth being a pert whippersnapper, who, having recently adapted from the French a short farce for a transpontine theatre, was regarded by himself and his friends (more particularly the former) as a prodigy of dramatic genius. The merriment was at its height, when a sound as of rustling silk was heard outside the drawing-room door.

"There's a lady coming," exclaimed a strapping lad from the country, who was on his first visit.

"No there isn't," replied a dark-haired young lady, with a smile, which was reciprocated by all the rest of the company.

Bang went a heap of chains, apparently cast with great violence on the stairs.

"Jingo! what's that?" cried the rustic, with a start.

"That's nothing," was the satisfactory answer. And again the smile went round.

A bell rang, a door slammed, a window clattered; and again was each exclamation of surprise followed by the universal smile. At last the shadow of a human face, in defiance of every optical law, was unmistakably visible on the wall. The rustic could bear himself no longer. Starting from his chair, he pointed to the apparition, and in a voice of horror shrieked, "For goodness' sake, what's that?"

Everybody laughed.

"Take it easy, old fellow," said the dramatic genius. "That's only the ghost."

At these words, the lights began to burn blue, the shadow became something more than a mere undefined profile, and a melancholy voice spake as follows:

"True, I am only the ghost, and much do I deserve your pity. Many years ago I resolved to make a sensation in this neighbourhood, and I effected my purpose chiefly by means of the noises, which most of you know but too well. But people have grown used to my rustle, accustomed to my rattle, habituated to my clatter, familiar with my ring. Even my shadow—my grand effect—scarcely elicits a remark. My invention has been exhausted long ago, and noisy as I may be, I cannot command attention. If any one here among you, having greatly distinguished himself in youth, thinks he can go on for ever on the strength of his early reputation, by simply repeating himself, without giving any new direction to his talent, let him take warning by me, or he will find in time that he is only a ghost."

The young folks were all edified, and the prodigy of genius went to his bed a sadder and a wiser man.

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On the 2nd of January, 1864, will be commenced, to be completed in Six Numbers of ALL THE YEAR ROUND, a New Story, called A WHITE HAND AND A BLACK THUMB.

Volume XI. will begin on the 15th of February, 1864, with a New Serial Story, entitled QUITE ALONE, by GEORGE AUGUSTUS SALA.

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